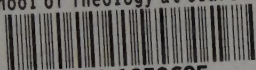


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A GUIDE
TO THE
CHRISTIAN MINISTRY;
OR,
Manual
FOR
CANDIDATES FOR THE SACRED OFFICE.

BY THE
REV. THOMAS WALLACE.

“Si agnoscis dignitatem, da operam ut glorifices susceptam functionem; si difficultatem, abjice socordiam, et vigila; si periculum intelligis, cave ne declines ad dextram, sive ad sinistram; si premium consideras, ne te pigeat ullius difficultatis.”—ERASMUS, in his *Ecclesiastes*, to *Young Candidates for the Holy Ministry*.

“Either the Gospel is not true, or there are few who, in a due manner, discharge that ministry which they take upon them.”—JOHN OWEN, D.D.

LONDON:
PUBLISHED FOR THE CONGREGATIONAL UNION,
BY JACKSON AND WALFORD,
18, ST. PAUL'S CHURCHYARD.

1849.

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LONDON:
J. UNWIN, GRESHAM STEAM PRESS,
BUCKLESBURY.

THE Committee of the Congregational Union of England and Wales send forth this work with prayer, and hope that, by the Divine blessing, it may assist to guide into the sacred ministry those "called of God," under just views, clearly discerned and thoroughly felt. The Committee having fully considered the design of issuing proposals for such a volume, and two gentlemen having engaged to contribute Two Hundred Pounds as the premium to be offered, the subject was fully propounded in a memorial presented to the Ninth Autumnal Assembly of the Union, held at York, in October, 1847. Cordial sanction was then given to the proposal. The Rev. H. F. Burder, D.D., the Rev. James Parsons, and the Rev. R. Alliott, LL.D., accepted the office of adjudicators on the merits of the Essays that might be produced, and which were invited by the notification given on page iv. The award on the MSS. received was presented to the Nineteenth Annual Assembly of the Union in May, 1849. To complete needful information respecting the production of the work, the award is here given, as is also the memorial read at York, with the hope that it may not only explain, but assist in accomplishing, the great design contemplated—a more enlightened and serious entrance on the sacred ministry.

By direction of the Committee of the Union,

ALGERNON WELLS, *Sec.*

Congregational Library,
13th Nov., 1849.

PROPOSAL

TO OBTAIN

A MANUAL OR HANDBOOK FOR CANDIDATES FOR THE CHRISTIAN MINISTRY.

Two Christian friends have generously given each One Hundred Pounds, to form a premium for the best production, for the purposes, and of the character, set forth in the following description: and the Rev. Dr. H. F. Burder, the Rev. Dr. R. Alliott, and the Rev. James Parsons, have kindly undertaken to adjudicate upon the merits of the MSS. which the proposal may call forth.

1. DESIGN OF THE WORK.—To guide those who desire the work of the ministry in deciding with enlightened seriousness the first question—"Shall I become a Christian minister?" To assist such as have settled this question in the affirmative, by all suitable incentives, warnings, and advice, to advance into the ministry with the best possible preparations in all respects; and to facilitate devout conference between pastors and young brethren consulting them on this momentous subject, on every distinct consideration involved therein.

2. CONTENTS OF THE WORK.—A just representation of the Christian ministry in itself, and as exercised among Independent churches. A clear discussion of the "Call" to the Christian ministry. An account of the qualifications of a good minister of Jesus Christ. A statement of the motives and spirit with which the ministry should be undertaken. An appeal to the inquirer, for integrity, seriousness, and entire satisfaction in arriving at his decision. Counsels

to the student on his piety, morals, studies, habits, and manners. Advice on preaching. On settlement. On ministerial plans. Especial counsels on ordination, its solemnities, uses, vows, and influence.

3. CHARACTER OF THE WORK.—While specially intended for use among Congregationalists, its spirit and scope to be altogether catholic and moral—not controversial. In matter and style condensed—not expanded. Divided distinctly into chapters, heads, and paragraphs. In extent, not materially to exceed, or fall short of, four hundred duodecimo pages, printed full, in brevier type. Scripture references to be carefully noted.

4. CONDITIONS OF THE PROPOSAL.—The MSS. to be forwarded, under seal, to the Rev. A. Wells, Congregational Library, Blomfield-street, Finsbury, on or before the last day of January, 1849. Each MS. to be inscribed with a motto, and accompanied by a sealed envelope containing the same motto, subscribed with the name of the writer; no one of which to be opened till after adjudication. The unsuccessful MSS. to be returned to the writers—the successful MS. to be the property of, and to be published by, the Union, at the lowest possible price; not to obtain profit, but to facilitate and extend circulation.

N.B.—The foregoing description of the desired book is not designed to restrict and fetter writers who may undertake the work; but to give a distinct view of the object contemplated. The best possible production is sought. The author who can most improve on the sketch given will be hailed as the successful benefactor of the ministry and of the church.

By direction of the Committee,

JOHN BLACKBURN,	} Secretaries.
W. S. PALMER,	
ALGERNON WELLS,	

THE ADJUDICATORS' AWARD.

THE adjudicators have carefully examined the nine Essays sent to them, and have endeavoured impartially to estimate their comparative merits, and their adaptation to the end proposed. They concur in the judgment that the prize is due to the author of the Essay with the signature "Adjutor." It appears, upon the whole, to combine the greatest amount of the requisites specified in the proposals and instructions given for the guidance of the competitors, and to evince the greatest adaptation to promote the object of the donors of the prize. This Essay, in the opinion of the adjudicators, is comprehensive, lucid, and earnest. It is obviously the result of the prayerful study of the Word of God, of discriminating observation and experience, and of deep sympathy with the candidate for the Christian ministry, in his first inquiries, in his academic studies, and in his entrance on the discharge of pastoral duties.

The adjudicators congratulate the Rev. Thomas Wallace, of Bridport, as the author of the Essay, and cordially unite in their earnest desires and prayers, that the blessing of God may render its publication extensively and permanently useful.

H. F. BURDER.

RICHARD ALLIOTT.

JAMES PARSONS.

OBSERVATIONS

ON THE

FIRST APPROACH INTO THE CHRISTIAN MINISTRY, AND ON ORDINATION
TO THE PASTORAL AND MINISTERIAL OFFICE,

INTENDED

TO INTRODUCE A PROPOSAL TO OBTAIN A PRIZE WORK
ON THESE TWO SUBJECTS.

ON the importance to Christian churches of a holy, faithful, and effective ministry, not one word need be said in the way of proof, or for the purpose of conviction. This is one of those clear cases of practical certainty which can by no ingenuity be drawn into doubt and disputation. Neither, in such an assembly as the present, can it be necessary to dwell on this sentiment for the sake of impression, or to move the conscience and the feelings by stirring sluggish convictions into activity. All present are ministers, and the near friends and associates of ministers—all present are conversant with the affairs, and anxious for the welfare of churches—and it will move the sympathy and interest of every mind here to open a discourse on this most vital and solemn of subjects. The labour of the writer will be much more required not to disappoint expectation than to awaken it.

In two different ways is the state of the ministry both the gauge and the instrument of the prosperity of churches; so that such as is the ministry, such will be the churches also. It must be so, because, in the first place, the ministry springs out of the bosom of the churches. These guides and rulers

of the churches are first their children. In their womb have they their birth, and from their breasts their nourishment. Such sons as the churches produce and cherish, such must be the public ministry and pastoral rule among them. For in the second place, those who, as sons of the churches, derive their spiritual life and character from them, soon begin to reflect that influence and character back again upon the churches, when filling office and proclaiming truth as their chosen ministers. Nor is it easy to determine whether the early influence of the churches on the ministry, or the later influence of the ministry on the churches, is the more potent and influential.

One thing, however, is certain: in all cases of moral and religious development, first influences are all-important. Whether they can be traced or not, they are at the root of whatever the mature man becomes. The health and strength of his soul—his bent or erect stature—his pure or turbid spirit—his thorough or defective principle—he owes to some early bias or impression, to some causes born with him, or received after birth, no one can tell how soon. What is thus true of the man, is no less true of the minister. What kind of minister he will be, is determined greatly by the manner in which he became a minister. In proportion to the rectitude, seriousness, and wisdom of his first impulses and approaches towards the sacred office, will be the real success and happiness of his future course therein. In proportion to the faithfulness, judgment, and care of those with whom he first advises on the subject, will be the safety and satisfaction, not only of his entrance on the work, but because of that, therefore, of all that follows. A faulty entrance on the ministry may not be an utterly irretrievable mischief. Repentance for what was sinful in that momentous step may avail, not only to pardon, but possibly to some peculiar impulses and qualifications in one who finds himself so specially a monument of the mercy he proclaims. The after-detection of much that was mistaken and erroneous, in

the outset of his career, may very impressively teach a minister many lessons of wisdom, tenderness, and humility. But these are rare and exceptional cases. They do but prove the rule. And when they occur, their possible advantages are most dearly and painfully purchased. They are, besides, cases of Divine sovereignty, not of human calculation or attempt. Moreover, though some such instances may seem associated with ministerial attainments and usefulness of a high order, yet the man consecrated to God from his early youth—the man whose very first wishes and thoughts of the ministry were pure and hallowed aspirations—the man who approaches the altar with conscience and with trembling—this is the man to make a good minister of Jesus Christ. Reason and experience are all in favour of this law. Such must be the origin and training of the minister who will labour through life with courage, peace, power, and honour.

Considerable anxiety has been of late expressed concerning the rising ministry in our churches. The manner and terms in which this has been done, may not have been always kind and judicious; but there seems no reason to charge the feeling itself on any harsh and jealous temper. It has worn every appearance of upright, godly zeal. Neither can the fears now alluded to, be fairly represented as altogether groundless. The present can hardly be thought a period of rising life, power, and earnestness in the religion of the nonconforming churches of this land. It can hardly be maintained that in this respect the present is in advance of preceding generations. Grave doubts whether the contrary is not, indeed, the truth, may be reasonably entertained by those most concerned to judge with candour and hope. Yet advancement in pure and living godliness, above anything that the oldest among us can remember, is as devoutly to be desired as, for the accomplishment of *our* views and hopes, it is urgently and indispensably needed. Those better times, which some venerable brethren think they either knew in their early days, or of which their fathers told them, were

still a starting point for advance, not for decline. And if there be, indeed, any general and real sinking down of the tone of religion in our times and communities, it cannot be doubted that the ministry nurtured and produced in such a state of things, must unconsciously, and without special blame, share in the prevailing feebleness.

But complaints, or confessions, or controversies, on such a subject, can be of little practical avail, except as they stir and guide to effort for some remedy. This is now to be proposed for consideration; and though it be hardly possible to propose reform, or even improvement, without some expressed or implied censure of what is thus supposed to need correction, yet, in the present instance, the utmost reserve and tenderness in pointing out deficiencies is felt to be as much a duty as a probable means of success. In looking at the question, can we improve, or in any way act favourably on the character and efficiency of the ministry in our churches, it is natural and wise to direct attention to its beginnings and origin. It will be a question vital to the object in view, whether of the young men among us, truly converted and decided, those best qualified and most desirable are drawn into the sacred office. With exceptions, of course, it is believed that such is probably the truth. Some few, indeed, whose qualifications for the work are obvious and eminent, do never enter upon it; a much larger number, not suitably qualified, do seek and find entrance into it. But, for the most part, of the youthful sons of the churches, the right and best men do enter the ministry. Care and wisdom might do something effectual, both to draw into this noble and honourable employ those gifted brethren whose services in it are now lost to the churches; and to do that real kindness to the individuals, and that real service to the public, which would be effected by preventing the entrance into our ministry of men not qualified for the work.

But this is not the direction or design of the proposal now to be submitted. Taking for granted that upon the

whole, at present, the right and best youths in our churches enter the ministry, a deeply interesting question arises—Can the manner of their entrance, can the influences under which their first approaches to the work are made, be so improved as to exert a salutary and beneficial influence on their whole ministerial character and course? It is believed that such improvements are practicable. Yet these improvements will not be sought in any alteration in the opinions, or modes of procedure, or arrangement for education relative to entrance on the ministry now prevalent among us. Whether, in these respects, there is anything susceptible of correction, is a question not now involved, or to be mooted. The idea to be now presented and embodied is, that a much deeper impression might at the outset, and in all the preliminary proceedings connected with the entrance of young men on our ministry, be produced on their minds respecting the work on which they are entering, and the spirit and tone in which alone it can be fitly approached and prosecuted. The ministry is a work to be undertaken on spiritual impulses, affections, and purposes, with religious seriousness, earnestness, and conscientiousness. Now these are dispositions admitting of most indefinite and varying degrees. They may be very high, or very low. They may exist in but languid force in many who are approaching the work, with proofs of moral integrity not to be questioned by their fellow men, and with general qualifications for the work of a high order. There may be times when they prevail but feebly with the entire class of young men in any community training for service in its sanctuaries. This must be a most serious evil. It would be very unfair to charge the blame of it wholly or chiefly on the rising ministry itself. Neither might it be justly chargeable on the false sentiments, or the defective plans of that religious body for maintaining its ministerial succession. It might be really imputable to defective care in making the whole affair of guiding a young man into the ministry at every step a proceeding of deliberate,

solemn, enlightened religious impression, with reference to that work, and his entrance thereon.

Let disheartening and irritating censure, of what at present prevails among us in this respect, be carefully avoided. Let it be distinctly noted that whatever of such censure may be unavoidably implied, falls not on the rising ministry, but on that more advanced class by which the younger are sanctioned and guided. Nor let the acknowledgment be omitted, that practice, in such proceedings as are now under consideration, must so exceedingly vary as to render general representations hardly practicable, and general censures wholly unjust. But the probability of usefulness far outweighs the risk or evil of offence, when a simple desire of improvement is expressed with earnestness, but with respect, in some such form as the following:—

There might be eminent advantage in much more frequent, searching, and devout conferences, than are now common, between ministers and the young men who consult them on entrance into the ministry, before decision is arrived at by either party. Many most interesting questions would thus be profitably considered, and many most beneficial influences would thus be produced. The young inquirer would learn more distinctly the real nature of the work he sought; his views of the importance of his contemplated step would become more profound; he would count the cost; he would proceed with thought; his first approaches to the sanctuary, his converse with the porter at the door, would inspire him with reverence. It might make a difference in the man and the minister, to the day of his death, most salutary and blessed, that he was not at once and on slight conference sanctioned when first he sought the ministry, but that all his own seriousness and tenderness were more deeply engraved on his heart by that of the treatment he received from the guide he consulted.

The religiousness of college life might be more adequately cared for. Mental and social causes render that period one

of serious trial in the spiritual life. The pastors who introduced students into those seminaries might prolong, with eminent advantage, their cares and counsels for their, perhaps, sons in the Gospel, by whom this would be as gratefully received as it would be profitably improved and long remembered. The occasional visits of pastors, by appointment, for devout conference and exercises, with some or all of the students, might be productive of most valuable impressions and results. The office of tutor is so high, and that office is in our colleges so filled, that it would be unbecoming to say what might be done, or what wished, to combine, from the same honoured instructors, the religious culture of the students in full proportion, and equal advance, with their attainments in the learning so essential to render them ministers thoroughly equipped for their work.

It is obvious that in these early approaches to the ministry, and preparations for it, the future minister is in process of formation. His official morals and religion, so to speak, are receiving their impress, direction, and quality. It will mainly depend on how, at this period, he thinks in his heart, and how he is influenced by his guides, what manner of minister any young man will become. Through life it must be expected that he will prove diligent or careless, serious or superficial, conscientious or lax, earnest or heartless, in his high vocation, according to the solemnity or unconcern with which his introduction into it has been conducted. Here, therefore, what is negative must be mischievous—may be fatal. Not to deal faithfully, searchingly, seriously with a young candidate for the ministry throughout, is to inflict injury on his very soul. Not to impress his mind with a conviction that the ministry is evidently an awful office, in the judgment and feeling of those already sustaining it, is to sap and mine his own tender awe of the sacred work. And this is also an affair of degrees. There may be more or less of this salutary seriousness in conferring with candidates for the ministry. It may so far prevail as to leave no room for

human censure, when yet far higher degrees would be an eminent blessing. Wisdom is always profitable to direct. The ministry should not be made terrible. The spirits of those entering it should not be beaten down into superstitious and abject dread. True awe strengthens and raises the spirit it penetrates. Conscious uprightness, in great duties and awful functions, clothes the mind with the power of their sanctity and dread, in proportion as it is felt. It is the careless, not the thoughtful—the superficial, not the deep-feeling—minister, in whom his work will generate the fear that brings both torment and weakness.

Our ordination solemnities, and the manner of conducting them, are open to exactly the same line of remark. Deep and searching seriousness, careful inquiry and conference, will be in them as salutary, and a contrary spirit as hurtful, as in the previous steps of a young minister's introduction to his work. Ordinations to the Christian ministry should be, to all engaged in them, very solemn procedures; so much so, that they should ever be, both to older and younger ministers, sacramental occasions of a new baptism into the spirit of their work. Hence the importance of previous interviews with the young brother to be ordained, on the part of at least three or four of the brethren who are chiefly to conduct the service. Thus they may so thoroughly ascertain his views of truth as to incur no risk of being stumbled and checked in giving him their public sanction, by startling statements in his confession, witnessed before many witnesses. Thus they may convey to his young mind the solemn views of the ministry with which their own maturer judgments are penetrated. Thus they may give him, with love and wisdom, the counsels of their longer experience in all its painful or joyful varieties. The solemn prayers and counsels, confessions and engagements, of the public service would thus be sustained, rendered consistent, and made to penetrate all hearts as they never can when they stand alone in this respect,—are neither introduced,

nor followed among the parties engaged by adequate proceedings in private, intended to give them every proof of being genuine, every advantage for being effective. It need not be said that the public services connected with our ordinations admit of no improvement; they are, of course, in different instances, of various degrees of power, suitableness, and spirituality; but, in general, they are very solemn and impressive, highly adapted to sustain sound doctrine, and to advance real religion. On this very account, in one view, it is the more necessary that they should be accompanied by the private conferences and devotions adverted to; and for this reason—that high and solemn religious efforts in public, for the sake of consistency, and to prove themselves genuine, require the support of proportionate seriousness in private; failing of this, they lose the power, and even fall under suspicion. A solemn charge in public, with no affectionate advice in private—a ministerial confession received in public, with no scrutiny or safeguard in private—a solemn ordination prayer before the people, but no mutual supplications for each other, among the ministers ordaining with the minister ordained—can never be what they would be, were the public devotions no more than the swelling into eminence, and the rising into view, of the very same faithful devotions and solitudes already acted and cherished out of human view.

Such means of information and judgment as we possess, relative to those times, would lead to the conclusion, that the early Nonconformist pastors approached the ministry much more thoughtfully and reverently than is usual among us, their unequal followers. Their doctrinal sentiments were the result of much more thorough search. Their decision to cast in their lot with the Dissenting churches was arrived at with much more cautious deliberation. They gave much more ample and particular satisfaction, respecting their views of Divine truth, both to the ministers by whom their entrance on the ministry was sanctioned, and to the

churches which called them to take the oversight of them, than is our practice. Their ordinations, though less public, had a more awful solemnity. Every part of their proceeding was accompanied with fasting, prayer, and conference, in degrees unknown to our more easy and superficial habits. No doubt, an explanation of this difference may be found in the diverse character of their age from ours, equally in all other respects as in this: and it may be further accounted for by the influence of that great Methodistic movement of the eighteenth century, from which, with immense good, we inherit some mixture of evil. The less desirable element in the effects of Methodism is perhaps nowhere more conspicuous than in the Nonconformist ministry of this country. The disregard of order, so natural, perhaps so beneficial, in that vehement period—the introduction of men into the public ministry, merely for a hasty supply of the preaching so much needed, and for which their fervid fluency in speaking of religion supplied a ready fitness—their freedom from the rules of any regular ecclesiastical system, to all which they justly felt that their high and urgent vocation made them superior: all these causes have operated to make active habits of useful efforts, and readiness of speaking ability, too exclusively the qualifications for which young men are freely encouraged to enter, among us, the Christian ministry. Hence the patient, devout, studious, and self-denying qualities and practices, deemed so needful by our predecessors in the characters of candidates for the ministry, are among us too little regarded and required. Too slight and superficial in all our ways, both mental and religious, this characteristic evil besets us even in the solemn responsibilities of entering the ministry, and of guiding those who enter.

On the whole it can be thought no breach of candour or modesty to say, that as the present state of religion altogether in the Independent churches needs to be raised to a higher tone of feeling, and to an improved practice of self-

denying devotedness ; so the ministry most urgently requires such an advancement, in order to render it what in itself it ought to be, and to make it the instrument of every other needed renovation. The considerations adapted to produce thankfulness and encouragement, on a review of our state, must not be overlooked : but even a partial and over-sanguine estimate of these more favourable points must leave a thoughtful observer only anxious to employ them as occasions and means of desired improvement.

What means, then, can be supposed likely to act favourably on the whole state and efficiency of our ministry, by infusing more serious influence into all the early proceedings through which it is approached ? The practical measure, now to be submitted for consideration of this assembly of brethren, is—the production of some able, powerful book, well adapted to guide and impress both young inquirers for the ministry, and no less those called upon to advise them, with salutary seriousness in each and every step leading to that sacred employ. The best talents would be worthily employed in such a service. Its successful performance might, with a Divine blessing, be connected with most extensive usefulness. It is remarkable, that no such work at present exists. No manual or handbook for candidates for the Christian ministry. No standard compendium on the various subjects and questions, which must deeply interest every thoughtful young mind when revolving the inquiry, “ Shall I become a minister of the Gospel ? ” No book which a pastor, when consulted on this point, can put into the hands of an ingenuous youth, and say, “ Read that, study it, pray over it ; come to me, and confer with me on the several topics there discussed in order. Let me know how its statements perplex or encourage you.” The help, thus afforded, would be hardly less welcome and serviceable to the advising pastor, than to the inquiring youth. The public attention excited by calling for the production of such a book on the part of this Union, through

the medium of prize competition, to which in our times we stand indebted for so many seasonable and powerful discussions, would be, in the first instance, of great benefit—and, should a really able and suitable book be obtained, its lasting usefulness would be extensive and great. The money necessary for a liberal offer has been promised, so that, if the proceeding commends itself to the cordial and approving adoption of this assembly, the way is open to proceed without delay.

And while the primary and special design of the proposed proceeding is to improve the ministry in our own Denomination, it may be so conducted as to find acceptance and usefulness in other bodies of Christians also. The forms, through which candidates for the ministry are sanctioned and brought forward, of course vary in different communities, but the essential qualifications of mind and heart must be in all the same. And it is not mode, that we wish discussed and defended in the book now to be sought; but the graces, the life, and the power of a ministry, called and sent of God, that we desire to see promoted. A genuine catholic charity will delight to promote such an object in any and every church. It will deem a holy ministry the blessing and honour of even the least scripturally ordered churches; and a superficial, carnal ministry the bane of those modelled most carefully after the pattern exhibited in the Mount. Let, therefore, the proposed discussion enter into no defence of the validity of our ministry, and of the authority of our ordinations. The best proof that our ministry is valid will be found in the zeal and usefulness of those by whom it is sustained: the best support of all needful authority in our ordinations will be derived from their edifying solemnity, and from the manifest presence of God with them. There are times and places seasonable for necessary controversy; then and there the Christian advocate of truth will be at his post and duty. There are occasions, and the present seems to be one, when a higher region may be entered, and a

calmer duty performed: when charity, holiness, and practical religion may have undisturbed regard, and undivided effort.

The work which it is now suggested to call for, by proposal of a prize for competition, may be designated a "Manual, or Handbook for Candidates for the Christian Ministry;" and it seems needful that it should embrace a serious and plain discussion of the following points:—

That it should open with a faithful representation of what the Christian ministry really is, and ought to be—as the service of Christ, the care of souls, the ministry of truth, the charge of piety and virtue, a trust from God, and an account to God, most honourable, most awful. The position a minister takes in social life, and the trials peculiar to that position, would require to be set forth: and no less its advantages and disadvantages for the culture of personal religion, and the securing of personal salvation. The uses of study and knowledge, the necessity of labour, the value of entire consecration in this work, should be opened. And, in short, every representation made by which a young mind could be made to see truly and clearly what that ministry is in which it desires to be engaged. And all this in a manner not calculated to terrify or deter an ingenuous soul, but with that exact skill which would cause the entire representation to inspire and attract a right-hearted candidate; but to repel and reject every one, in mind, heart, or life, unfit for this high vocation.

Then the question of a call to the Christian ministry would demand careful examination. It should be divested of everything fanatical and mysterious, yet be made to appear real and from heaven. It should be shown what inward vocation of pure impulse and pious desire for the work must be felt—what indications of the Divine will, in the disposal of the circumstances and history of the individual, must be seen pointing out this course as the path of duty—what advice of pastors consulted, and sanction of Christian people should concur to encouragement — what

evident possession of the precise qualifications needful in the Christian minister must be discerned—in order that, by the concurrence of all these, a plain call to the work may be inferred with entire safety and satisfaction.

The qualifications needful for a minister of Christ should be stated—the mental abilities; the religious experience; the moral feelings and habits; the aptness for study in private, and for service in public, needful to qualify a minister for his work, should be faithfully represented; not in any extravagant, Utopian method, but with practical wisdom and fidelity. Nor would it be beneath notice, in such a work, to give some attention to physical considerations relative to bodily health and constitution, as tending to assist or impede a man in this all-important work.

Then would suitably follow a faithful statement of the motives by which a man should be actuated in desiring the work of a bishop; the devout exercises of soul that should accompany every step of his progress into it; the spirit of humility and deference in which advice should be sought; the purposes of consecration that should be cherished; and, in short, the vast importance of entering the ministry with a mind so clear, and by a way so holy, that in all after-life the soul may be cheered and stimulated by a remembrance of these its early vows and purposes.

Next in order would come advice and warnings on the student life of a candidate for the ministry. Here an ample field of observation would present itself. The difficulty would be found in selecting the topics to be discussed, and the counsels to be offered. It will require a master's hand to direct a young man studying for the ministry, how best to discipline his mind, employ his time, select his books, preserve his health, maintain his piety, cultivate his manners, study the best models of preaching, and by all means to furnish himself thoroughly for his work, and turn to best possible account the golden period, all too short, of preparation for the Christian ministry in the nineteenth

century, amidst divided sects, advanced intelligence, fastidious hearing, and harassing, incessant calls to publicity.

This accomplished, it would still remain to advise respecting probationary services, choice of settlements, and purport and plans of early pastoral habits, ministerial labours, hours of study, and manner of life.

The closing section would relate to ordination solemnities; how these should be approached; and what is their significance, and what their use. On this important subject advice might be respectfully tendered, both to the pastors who ordain, and to the young brother who is ordained. The benefits, and indeed the necessity, of private conference, previous and subsequent to the public engagements; the need of a frank avowal of his sentiments, on the part of every one who seeks the public sanction of churches and ministers to his entrance on the Christian ministry, and who asks fellowship as a minister among those churches and ministers; the solemn responsibility resting on those who ordain young brethren, to do so only upon sufficient satisfaction with them as Christians, as ministers, and as theologians; the vast importance of preserving ordination services among us in their high repute, as the most solemn, delightful, and edifying of all our public engagements; and the necessity that they should be both preceded and followed in private by everything in social deportment and intercourse adapted to sustain and follow up their holy influences on the minds of all having any part in them, either as actors or witnesses.

This sketch of the book it is proposed to seek, and of the uses it is thought such a book so obtained may answer, is respectfully submitted for the consideration of the present assembly. To the devout study of able brethren who may compete for the honour and usefulness of producing such a work, many topics here omitted will suggest themselves: the design will be expanded and perfected, and the execution rendered worthy of the design, in the hands of those whom

God may move to undertake the performance, should the proposal find favour in His sight, and be employed by Him as an instrument of good for His servants and churches.

It remains only to be added, that the discussion of the various topics should be elementary, simple, and clear: the subject distributed very distinctly into heads and chapters, to facilitate thought and discussion on each: the matter condensed, and the manner pregnant: the whole forming a book of but moderate size, and published at small cost; that so it may be such a work, in every respect, that the very first thing said to every one sought for the ministry, or seeking it, will be, "If you have not read that book, read it."

Whereon it was moved by the Rev. Thomas Stratten, of Hull; seconded by the Rev. John Alexander, of Norwich; and adopted:—

"That the proposal to obtain by competition a Manual or Handbook for Candidates for the Christian ministry, explained and submitted in the paper now read, is approved by this assembly; and the Committee of the Union is hereby instructed to proceed with all the measures necessary for carrying the design into effect."

AUTHOR'S PREFACE.

THE object of the present volume is simply to guide, counsel, and seriously admonish the rising ministry, in relation to the greatest and most solemn of all undertakings. No class associated with the Christian church is, confessedly, more interesting, more intelligent, or more important, than that of students for the Gospel ministry, and young ministers who are about entering on the pastoral office ; and it is *most desirable* that they should be directed and admonished, in a practical, scriptural, and persuasive manner, under the influence of the *best feeling*, on the range of varied and momentous duties devolving on them.

And, as there are many young men who are continually thinking of the ministry, who are exceedingly anxious respecting the path which they should pursue, and who dread taking a *false step*, it is of the utmost importance that they should be wisely and effectually guided at the outset of their inquiries, and that their solitudes may not be vainly or improperly cherished. It is, therefore, the design of the writer to make those statements—to submit those directions—and to tender those admonitions and appeals to this interesting and increasing class of reflective, pious, and devoted members of the church of Christ, who seriously regard the holy ministry, by attending to which they will not involve themselves in difficulty, and take a step rashly and unadvisedly, which would interfere with their happiness and usefulness throughout life.

It has also been the earnest desire of the author to *encourage* intelligent, holy, and superior candidates for the sacred office, and to furnish them, in a succinct and comprehensive manner, with those counsels which may be of material importance to them previously to commencing their studies—while their academic course is being pursued—and after their retirement from college life, and their entrance on the arduous and responsible duties of the pastorate.

It has been the most anxious wish and endeavour of the writer, in the composition of the volume, to avoid all finery, parade, and glitter;—to express his thoughts in a simple, perspicuous, unaffected, serious, and persuasive manner—to recur to great and indestructible principles—and to give the rising ministry such a view of their character, their duties, their solicitudes, their privileges, their responsibilities, their joys, and their expectations, as that they may not only be aided in the prosecution of their work, but have their impressions of its deep solemnity and unutterable importance increased in power and vividness.

May the special benediction of the Head of the Church, “the Chief Shepherd,” accompany the circulation of this volume; and, if young ministers are only better fitted for their engagements, directed amidst their difficulties, cheered and impelled in pursuing their labours, or rendered increasingly useful in connexion with the kingdom of our Lord and Saviour, by its careful and *dévotional* perusal, the writer will receive an ample recompence.

It is an offering tendered to the rising ministry with respect, solicitude, and love; may it be accepted in the same spirit in which it is presented—and may “the one Lord,” whom we desire to serve and honour, have *all* the praise!

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3. Self-possession.

4. Ability to acquire and retain knowledge.
5. Good sense.
6. Acquaintance with language.
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 Be economical.
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 frequent visiting—being out late at night.
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 Be marked by your delicacy and purity.
 Maintain the nicest sense of honour.
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They are to be the expositors of God's truth.

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Preach the truth as you find it in the Word of God.

Be particular in the selection of your subjects for the pulpit.

Do not seek after curious subjects—do not seek after difficult subjects ; but regard the edification of your people, and consult the Scriptures with prayer.

Select your subjects early in the week.

Let your sermons be well digested.

Attend to arrangement in your sermons.

Let your sermons be your own.

Compose your discourses under the influence of a devotional frame of mind.

Do not read your sermons.

Let your preaching be very evangelical, especially marked by its exhibition of Christ crucified.

Uniformly aim at simplicity.

Have little in your discourses that is controversial.

Indulge in expository preaching, and enrich your discourses by quotations from Scripture.

Let your preaching be experimental.

Cultivate in the pulpit a persuasive and an earnest mode of address.

When you enter the pulpit, aim simply at the conversion of sinners.

Preach to all.

Let your preaching be very faithful.

Let your preaching be marked by its impressiveness. That it may—

Be serious in the pulpit—be plain and idiomatic in your language—indulge in appropriate amplification—preach to the common people—let your sermons be adapted to the popular mind—attend to the point and fulness of your applications—see that your discourses are uniformly practical—remember that evangelical preaching is always the most impressive.

When preaching, be invariably in earnest.

Endeavour to improve in preaching. That you may—

Be diligent students of the Scriptures—pursue a regular course of reading, especially theological—write much—abound in private prayer.

Avoid three faults in preaching, which frequently prevail.

1. Want of clearness in the tone of voice.
2. A scolding manner in the pulpit.
3. Tediousness in preaching.

Never preach the word without much prayer to the Holy Spirit for his aid and blessing.

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In concluding this chapter, we would say to the rising ministry, "What a work is before you!"

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Let your call be unanimous.

Let your invitation originate from the church.

Be not unwilling to settle, for the first few years, in some retired neighbourhood.

Prior to accepting a charge, gain the advice of your tutors, and some of the neighbouring pastors.

Ascertain the character of the deacons.

Previously to replying to the call, review all the circumstances which led you to visit the people.

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Be very particular with regard to your sermons.

Make the acquisition of eminent holiness the object of your supreme regard.

Be especially marked by your prudence.

Be accessible to your people.

Always maintain the dignity of the Christian pastor.

Attend, with wise discrimination, to the various classes in your congregation—especially,

Children—those just entering on active life—experienced and aged

Christians—the poor—anxious inquirers—backsliders—the officers and members of the church.

Pay marked attention to the sick and dying.

Never disregard the Sabbath school.

Let your church meetings be wisely conducted.

Discover the utmost care in admitting members to the church.

Be very regular and devout in administering the Lord's Supper.

Uniformly maintain your prayer meetings.

Take deep interest in the week-day evening lecture.

Visit your people with regularity, and, especially, as the pastor.

Cultivate a liberal and fraternal spirit.

Be solicitous for the prosperity of our great religious institutions, and for the evangelisation of the world.

Attend, during the whole of your pastorate, to four admonitions.

1. Eschew taking an active and prominent part in politics.

2. Be very wary with regard to stimulating drinks.

3. Be very prudent in your deportment towards the female sex.

4. Do not be unduly discouraged with little things.

Do not be too anxious to know the results of your labours.

Be willing to occupy, for years, a humble situation, if only where God has placed you.

CONCLUDING REFLECTIONS AND APPEALS.

Remember that the usefulness of your ministry will be always associated with your spirituality, and result from it.

Labour faithfully until death.

Keep the crown in view.

Expect meeting your people at the judgment-seat of Christ.

Hope to meet many of your flock in heaven.

Still, remember, if you are faithful, that, in the case of those who fall short of the kingdom, you will be "a sweet-smelling savour to God," even "in them that perish."

GUIDE TO THE CHRISTIAN MINISTRY.

CHAPTER I.

A SUMMARY VIEW OF THE CHRISTIAN MINISTRY.

No undertaking can, for a moment, be compared with that of the Christian ministry. It is universal in its range, supremely important in its object, growingly valuable and precious in its influence, immeasurably blissful or calamitous in its results,—and those results commensurate with eternity. What can involve thoughts, or consequences, more sublime, joyous, or appalling, than those which are associated with the exclamation of the apostle Paul—"For we are unto God a sweet savour of Christ, in them that are saved, and in them that perish: To the one, we are the savour of death unto death, and to the other, the savour of life unto life. And who is sufficient for these things?"—(2 Cor. ii. 15, 16.)

This, however, is the character, this is the influence, these are the inconceivable results, of the Christian ministry, when it is exercised with fidelity—discharged from love to the Saviour—and accompanied with power. The doctrines proclaimed—the counsels furnished—the claims urged—the encouragements imparted—the promises applied—the warnings expressed—the appeals and expostulations communicated—the unceasing labours required—the overwhelming thoughts and expectations cherished, in relation to the day of judgment, and the final and eternal doom of man—combine in clothing the ministry of the Gospel with a

character of undefinable and measureless solemnity, dignity, and grandeur. It comprehends every thing that is vast. It repudiates, at once, every thing that is narrow, restrictive, or little. It soars to heaven. It descends to the grave. It penetrates the regions of darkness and despair. It ranges the globe. It wings its flight through the universe. It allies itself with the designs and work of the Divine Redeemer; and its issues will be realised, in a manner which we cannot now conceive, during eternity.

Clear and scriptural views of the Christian ministry, then, it is obvious, are not only most desirable, but *surpassingly* important. Highly important to all, but, pre-eminently, to those who have entered on the work, and those who are *looking forward* to the realisation of its solicitudes, and the full and permanent discharge of its sacred engagements. Many, among the different sections of the church, it is to be feared, have assumed the office of the ministry, without forming any correct and discriminating judgment of the nature and magnitude of their undertaking; without any realising views of the solemnity and arduousness of their duties; without any solicitude whatever to labour for the benefit of souls; and, by every plan, every effort, every sacrifice, to “make *full proof* of their ministry:” * and the results of such ignorance, such presumption, such a want of principle, have soon been apparent. They have cared for themselves, not for the people. They have breathed no desire to glorify the Saviour. Their duties have only been *officially* performed—in a superficial, listless, feeble, inefficient manner; without life—without unction—without a blessing. They have dishonoured “the Lord from heaven,” and dishonoured their office. They have rushed unbidden into a work for which they were not designed, or qualified; and, if they have continued in the office of the ministry, it has been evident, that their minds were not fitted for its engagements, and that their hearts were not consecrated to

* 2 Timothy iv. 5.

its hallowed and onerous labours; and their exertions have been cold, general, uncertain, and comparatively inoperative. Sound and discriminating views, therefore, of the nature of the Christian ministry are indispensable, on the part of every candidate for its functions, its sacrifices, its honours, its ultimate rewards. A person who is ignorant of its real character, its claims, its designs, its unvarying requirements, has no right to enter on the work; indeed, he is totally disqualified for it. The mind must be well enlightened on these points. The views entertained must be scriptural, profound, realising, absorbing, that mistakes may be avoided—that errors may be corrected—that no undue influence may warp the judgment—that no injurious and withering results may follow—that souls may not be misled, and, eventually, lost—lost fearfully, and *for ever*.

View, then, the Christian ministry under the following aspects:—

1. In the *Divinity* of its appointment.

This is a most important consideration, and uniformly necessary to be regarded, that appropriate respect for the ministry should be felt, that the sacredness of the ministry should be maintained, that the scriptural influence of the ministry should be exerted, and that the power and usefulness of the ministry should be realised. And this thought should *precede* all other views; for if the ministry be not of *Divine* institution,—if it be only a human arrangement to subserve certain purposes, however interesting and valuable in themselves—it is deprived of nearly all its weight, and, assuredly, of its great and principal efficacy. The Christian ministry, however, is not of men, but of God. It is a Divine arrangement for the accomplishment of the benevolent and gracious purposes of Heaven—for the glory of Christ, the extension and perpetuity of his kingdom—and for the present and immortal happiness of man. The dispensation of the Gospel, strictly speaking, commenced with

the ministry of the Saviour, and that of his apostles. From the Lord Jesus it originated, and by Him its sublime doctrines were announced, and its precious invitations were expressed,—“Come unto me, all ye that labour, and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.”—(Matt. xi. 28.) “If any man thirst, let him come unto me, and drink.”—(John vii. 37.) After our Divine Lord had risen, he extended the commission of his apostles to all nations, giving them the charge—“Go ye, therefore, and teach *all nations*, baptising them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world. Amen.”—(Matt. xxviii. 19, 20.)

Mark renders the Saviour’s command more specific—“Go ye into all the world, and preach the Gospel to *every creature*.”—(Mark xvi. 15.) And, in obedience to their Master’s injunction, “they went forth, and preached everywhere, the Lord working with them, and confirming the Word with signs following.”—(Mark xvi. 20.)

When Christian churches were formed, a class of men was appointed in each society and district, expressly that they might proclaim the Word, and administer the ordinances of Baptism, and the Lord’s Supper. See the Divine institution and efficacy of the Christian ministry, in the following selection of passages, to which reference should at once be made:—

1 Corinthians i. 21, 22.

1 Corinthians iii. 4, 5.

1 Corinthians iv. 1.

1 Corinthians ix. 13, 14.

1 Corinthians xii. 28, 29.

Colossians iv. 17.

1 Timothy i. 12.

Titus i. 3.

The sentiments of these texts are embodied in that clear and comprehensive passage, Ephesians iv. 11, 13: “And he gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers; for the per-

fecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ: till we all come, in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ.”

The Christian ministry, then, is a Divine institution for the church—for its enlargement, edification, and establishment—to accomplish, by the Divine benediction, ends the most momentous and glorious, till “the consummation of all things.” It is not an arrangement of human wisdom, or subtlety, but it is God’s express ordination, that, through the means of grace, dispensed by enlightened, faithful, and holy ministers of the Word, spiritual and immortal blessings may flow to men. “It has pleased God, by the foolishness of preaching, to save them that believe.”—(1 Cor. i. 21.) “Because the foolishness of God is wiser than men, and the weakness of God is stronger than men.”—(1 Cor. i. 25.) The ministry of the Word, therefore, from the Divinity of its appointment, is clothed with *special authority*; and God has not only engaged to crown it with his blessing, provided that pure motives govern those who exercise it, and that Christian doctrines be proclaimed, but He has rendered it unspeakably advantageous and influential, from generation to generation, until this hour; so that what the apostles announced, will apply with still more significance now—“We preach Christ crucified, unto the Jews a stumbling-block, and unto the Greeks foolishness;—but unto them which are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God, and the wisdom of God.”—(1 Cor. i. 23, 24.)

2ndly. View the Christian ministry, in the elevation of its character.

Its nobility is of the highest kind. It bears on it the impress of Heaven. Its dignity and grandeur no language can describe—no imagination portray—no intellect adequately conceive. Its dignity springs from three circumstances.

The *Divinity of its origin*.—God himself has originated the office. God himself calls to the work. God himself appoints the specific subjects which are to be proclaimed and enforced. God himself imparts all the qualifications which are desirable and necessary. God himself bestows “the blessing which maketh rich,” and which is associated with life, happiness, and salvation. Hence the unspeakable dignity of the office of the ministry.

The dignity of the Christian ministry arises from the circumstance, That the *Saviour himself* sustained the office.—He discharged its duties. He pursued its labours. He unfolded its great subjects. He tendered its generous invitations. He expressed its directions and requirements. He administered its encouragements. He experienced its temptations and trials. He submitted to the obloquy and indignities of a corrupt world which are poured upon it. This circumstance clothes the ministry of the Gospel with peculiar sacredness, importance, and grandeur. “The Lord from heaven” sustained and exemplified the character of a minister of the Word of Life, that he might “magnify the office”—evince the dignity and moment of the undertaking, and present before his ministers a model of surpassing and inimitable loveliness, until “He shall appear the second time, without sin, unto salvation.”—(Heb. ix. 28.)

The dignity of the ministry flows from the consideration, That it has to deal with *immortal beings*.—Beings who are here only for a very short and uncertain season—who are proceeding with almost inconceivable rapidity to the eternal world—whose journey will soon, and may suddenly, terminate—whose warfare will quickly cease—whose doom, in a very limited period, will be irreversibly sealed. They will, in a few fleeting years, be introduced to eternity, and, then, their existence will, most significantly, be said to commence; an existence whose degradation or honour—whose darkness or light—whose misery or bliss—will always be realised—will never, can never, come to a close. The contempla-

tion, therefore, that the Christian ministry has to deal exclusively with immortal beings, renders it inconceivably dignified and sublime. As ministers, "the conduct of souls to heaven" is our business, our express and uniform business—souls which can never die—souls which, however, may perish through our inattention, mistakes, coldness, or want of real, spiritual, and earnest concern for their recovery from the fall, their restoration to Christ, their final salvation. With what solemnity, as well as grandeur, does this thought encircle the Christian ministry!

3rdly. View the ministry in the holiness of its spirit.

This is explicitly enjoined, and its development, on the part of those who are consecrated to the work of the ministry, is not only desirable, but indispensable. Those are expressly required to "be *clean*, who bear the vessels of the Lord."—(Isa. lii. 11.) The Christian minister is to be "a vessel unto honour, sanctified, and meet for the Master's use, and prepared unto every good work."—(2 Tim. ii. 21.) "A bishop must be blameless."—(1 Tim. iii. 2.) He is to "be an *example* of the believers, in word, in conversation, in charity, in spirit, in faith, in purity."—(1 Tim. iv. 12.) The utmost holiness of character, chasteness, and elevation of spirit, is, under all circumstances, most befitting the person who sustains the ministerial office, or the candidate for it. Holiness is the world in which he should dwell. It should be the atmosphere which he continually breathes. It should be the object of his most ardent desires, of his most vigorous efforts. It should constitute the source of his highest blessedness. A holy state of the thoughts, the passions, the sensibilities, the desires; a prevailing holiness in the frame and temperament of the mind and character, should be regarded as the characteristic and pre-eminent charm of the minister of the Gospel. Holiness is the unsullied robe in which he should be always arrayed—the bright and peerless crown which he should continually wear. Indeed, what is

he *without* it? What are the plans he forms—the prayers he presents—the discourses he delivers—the visits he pays—and all the professional duties he fulfils—without it? Idle—powerless—a mockery—a delusion—a snare! In the Christian ministry, holiness should prompt all the arrangements made, direct all the movements contemplated, or undertaken, dictate all the sermons preached, control all the labours performed, adorn every part of the daily character and conduct exemplified, and bless all the energies and efforts put forth to glorify the Lord Jesus.

“The conversation of a Christian minister,” Robert Hall observes, “should be always such as is adapted to strengthen, not impair, the impression of his public instructions.” “The whole cast of his character should be such as is adapted to give weight to the exercise of his ministerial functions. ‘Ye are the salt of the earth,’—‘Ye are the light of the world,’ (Matt. v. 13, 14,) said our Saviour to his disciples, whom he was about to send forth in the character of public teachers. As persons to whom the conduct of souls is committed, we cannot make a wrong step, without endangering the interests of others; so that, if we neglect to take our soundings, and inspect our chart, ours is the misconduct of the pilot, who is denied the privilege of perishing alone. The immoral conduct of a Christian minister is little less than a *public triumph* over the religion he inculcates: and, when we recollect the frailty of our nature, the snares to which we are exposed, and the wiles of our adversary, who will proportion his efforts to the advantages resulting from his success, we must be aware how much the necessity of maintaining an exemplary conduct adds to the difficulty of the ministerial function.” The above sentiments, so admirable in themselves, and so admirably expressed, speak forcibly to all. They are full of beauty, and full of power.

Still, this elevation of character and conduct, under *all* circumstances, the ministers of Christ must studiously

maintain, from love to their Lord—from a regard for the glory of the Redeemer—from a desire to magnify their office—and to make full proof of their ministry. They must unceasingly imitate the holy Saviour: his laws must be theirs to obey; his conversation theirs to indulge; his aims theirs to pursue; his spirit theirs to exemplify. This will be their loveliest robe to wear. This will be the brightest and most precious crown to adorn and dignify them. This, in a word, will constitute their “exceedingly great joy.”

4thly. View the Christian ministry, in the qualifications which are requisite for the performance of its duties.

What a combination of qualifications, of high excellences, is necessary for the appropriate and effectual fulfilment of ministerial and pastoral engagements; and how desirable it is that the *full beauty* of the ministerial character be developed—and that the *noblest attainments* of the servant of Jesus Christ be possessed and exemplified!

How numerous and varied are the *intellectual* qualifications which are necessary, in order that the work of the Christian preacher and pastor may be scripturally and efficiently performed; that the ministry may command its legitimate influence; and that the designation, “an *able* minister of Christ,” may be applied with propriety and significance!

What *knowledge* is desirable! The minister of the Gospel should be “a full man.” His information should be accurate and extensive. His reading should be enlarged and discriminating; and his stores of thought should be continually augmenting. In relation to the Gospel, especially, he should be “a scribe well-instructed.” There should be no deficiency *here*. His acquaintance with Scripture should be profound, and constantly increasing—that no unsound principles may be inculcated—that the Word of God may be elucidated with intelligence and clearness, and that no crude and undigested sentiments may be expressed.

What *wisdom* is necessary! that no mistakes may be made—that no false step may be taken—that the truth may be judiciously expounded—that there may be a desirable selection of subjects—that character may be nicely discriminated—that the directions, encouragements, and warnings of Scripture may be suitably given, and impressively applied, and that the character of that “workman” may be exemplified, “who needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the Word of Truth.”—(2 Tim. ii. 15.)

What animation, what energy, are necessary! There must be no tameness—no coldness—but the utmost life and vigour. The faculties must be well cultivated—and the energies in full play. A tame, feeble, imbecile ministry, without spirit, or intellectual energy, is not the ministry adapted to *any* age, and, especially, to secure any attention, or command any weight, at the *present* period.

What *originality* is necessary! A minister must aim to be original, without any affectation, or eccentricity. He must be no copyist. He must have his own natural manner. He must think for himself. He must “reason out of the Scriptures,” and teach the people in his own unaffected, unborrowed style. This will give a zest, a freshness, an impressiveness to his ministrations which will always interest, and produce effect; and, in all his *pastoral* arrangements, he must think for himself;—and while he is employing those means to do good, which appear to him to be most desirable in the sphere in which he moves, there will be an originality, as well as sound practical wisdom, marking all his procedure.

And how numerous and superior are the *moral* and *religious* qualifications which are indispensable to the Christian ministry. What enlightened and lofty principles! What pure and elevated feelings! What devout and benevolent desires! What tender sympathies! What profound and delicate sensibilities! What modesty, yet what decision! What humility, yet what boldness! What meekness, yet what fire! What love to Christ! What superiority of

mind to the world! What hatred of sin! What compassion for sinners! What delight in holiness! What assiduousness in observing the ordinances! What kind and considerate adaptation to all the variety of human character and circumstances, for the sake of usefulness! What solicitude to win souls! What aiming, continually, at the conversion of sinners to God! What energy in the service of the Lord Jesus, that He *alone* may receive the glory!

These are some of the high qualifications which the Christian minister should possess, and be constantly augmenting; and, let it be remembered by *every candidate*, that they are not only desirable, but *requisite*. They will not, they cannot, unquestionably, be unfolded, in an *equal* degree—be reflected with equal or uniform beauty and brilliance. Correspondence and equality of ministerial ability and excellence we cannot expect, and scarcely, perhaps, should we desire. Every man after his own order. Every star differs in magnitude and glory. Still the *principal* qualifications, to which concise reference has been made, should be exhibited by *every* minister of the Gospel, and, indeed, are essential to his acceptance and reputation among the intelligent, the reflective, the pious; they are, also, indispensable to the usefulness, unction, and power of his ministry.

These, however, are qualifications which none but God can impart. He gives an original quickness and superiority of mind—an early acuteness and vigour to the faculties. He enables the memory, from comparative childhood, to retain and increase its stores. He furnishes those early developments of mind and character which are essential to usefulness. He enlightens the understanding, by his Word, and renovates the heart, by his Spirit. He gives an early bias and predilection for the ministry. He trains up his servants for the execution of his own work. He communicates all the moral and religious excellences which they respectively need. The energy of Paul—the eloquence of Apollos—the tenderness and persuasiveness of Barnabas—the fidelity and

power of Peter—the holiness and love of John—are all bestowed by Him, to illustrate and magnify his wisdom, to subserve his purposes of mercy, and to recover sinners effectually to himself.

And these qualifications the Christian minister invariably finds are materially increased, in connexion with *meditation*—long, silent, profound, holy meditation : that contemplation which is especially scriptural in the subjects regarded—which is pure and devout in its spirit and tone—which wings the soul to heaven.

These qualifications are increased by *prayer* :—that prayer which is dictated by the Holy Spirit—which is sent up fervidly to God—and which is poured forth in the exercise of a strong faith, that the blessings solicited will be bestowed.

Their augmentation and permanence are, also, inseparable from *diligent effort* :—a studious and unceasing endeavour to advance in every thing that is excellent, every thing that is desirable for the efficient discharge of duty, that the gifts and graces of the Christian minister may appear to all men ; and that it may be evinced, in the clearest, boldest, fullest manner, that he is the appointed servant of God—his accredited herald—his constituted and qualified messenger to the church of Christ.

These endowments of the able, holy, and devoted minister of the Word should be ardently desired, and unceasingly sought after, by those who are anxious to honour the Saviour, and to have the energy of his grace accompanying their labours.

5thly. View the Christian ministry, in the pressing nature of its *responsibilities*.

These are not only serious, they are tremendous, awful, and ever accumulating. They spread themselves before the mind in long and vivid array ; and, when they are scripturally pondered, appropriately and deeply felt, what thoughts are awakened—what a train of associations is

called up—what anticipations, with eternity in view, sublime and inexpressibly joyous, or ineffably mournful and appalling, are indulged!

There is responsibility *to God*: that infinitely wise and gracious Being, who has introduced his servants to the work of the ministry, and fitted them for its solemn and arduous duties. The ministry is “a trust” received from him. Hence the language of the apostle Paul to Timothy—“according to the glorious Gospel of the blessed God, which was committed to my trust,” (1 Tim. i. 11;) and every faithful and devoted minister of the Word desires to express his grateful and beautiful acknowledgment—“And I thank Christ Jesus our Lord, who hath enabled me, for that he counted me faithful, putting me into the ministry.”—(1 Tim. i. 12.)

The stewardship which God has committed to his ministers, they must never undervalue, never slightly regard. It is inexpressibly solemn and momentous. All its duties must be fulfilled—all its solitudes must be experienced—all its labours must be borne—all its accountability must be felt. That God who has instituted the office, and qualifies for the discharge of its functions, must be invariably regarded, and invariably honoured.

There is responsibility, on the part of Christian ministers, to *the Saviour*. He must be viewed and adored as “the Head of the Church”—as the King of Zion—as the Lord from heaven—as He who presides and rules in the assemblies of his saints—who “holds the stars in his right hand,” (Rev. ii. 1.)—who “walks in the midst of the golden candlesticks.”—(Rev. i. 20.) He requires all the knowledge of his servants to be communicated, for the establishment and diffusion of the Truth; all their abilities and energies to be consecrated to him, for the advancement of his honour,—all their sympathies and warm emotions to be expressed, and benevolently poured forth, for the purpose of drawing sinners to his feet,—and all their exertions to be made, that his

subjects may be increased—his kingdom be widened, and, consequently, his glory be augmented.

His responsibility to Christ Jesus, the Chief Shepherd, will be most intensely felt by every inferior shepherd, who has received his credentials, and his qualifications, from the Redeemer. It will be the object of his unceasing solicitude to be faithful to Him. It will be the study, the untiring labour of his life, to execute the solemn trust which Christ has reposed in him.

There is responsibility to *the Church*. To those who expect to be “fed with the finest of the wheat”—supplied continually with “the heavenly manna”—“nourished up in the words of faith and of good doctrine,” (1 Tim. iv. 6.) “instructed,” clearly and wisely, “in the mysteries of the kingdom”—led perpetually to the Redeemer,—directed, incited, and encouraged, at all times, in their progress to the celestial city.

The minister of the Gospel is peculiarly accountable, under God, to the church, which Christ has “purchased with his own blood,” for the manner in which he fulfils his arduous and ever-recurring engagements. Not that he is to be arrogantly dictated to, or controlled, by any human authority : still, the faithful and holy members of the church of God *expect* him to study their spiritual welfare, and to aim continually at doing them good,—proclaiming to them sound doctrine, giving them clear, affectionate, and practical exhibitions of the Saviour—exhorting them, at all periods, to holiness and usefulness in their career—ministering to them, as their wise adviser and comforter in the Lord, in the time of adversity, in the season of difficulty, in the hour of trouble, in the prospect of death.

No Christian minister, desirous of “edifying the body of Christ,” can possibly be indifferent to the claims of the church on his continual solicitude, energy, prayers, and holy watchfulness. He will feel his accountableness to *every* member of the church of Christ over whom he is placed, and

it will be his studious endeavour to prove a blessing to that member, in the anticipation of meeting in a brighter and happier world.

There is responsibility to *sinners*. To the careless, the undecided, the worldly, the unbelieving, the profane, the impure, the insensible, the scoffing, the obstinately rebellious—those who are inveterate in their opposition to the claims of the Saviour and his Gospel. These careless and determined sinners must be *pecially* regarded. They must never be forgotten. The minister of Christ must ever bear them in his mind, and on his heart. When he lies down at night—when he rises in the morning—when he enters his study to read, or meditate—when he ascends the pulpit to proclaim the Word of Life, he must dwell seriously and intensely on the case of the unconverted. Their numbers are boundless. Their condition is inconceivably mournful. Their ignorance of the spiritual beauty and surpassing claims of Christianity is profound. Their moral degradation is unspeakably great. Their iniquities “reach to heaven.” Their recklessness, in resisting God, in opposing the Saviour, in rejecting the Gospel, is most criminal and fearful. Their misery, because without God, without Christ, and without hope, in the world, is truly awful; and what renders it more appalling is, that they are *insensible* of it. Their lives are short and precarious, and their spirits, unrenovated by the Saviour’s grace, unsanctified by the Saviour’s blood, are introduced *every moment* to the world beyond the grave, the world of eternity—the regions of “darkness, death, and long-despair.” The responsibility of the Gospel ministry to sinners is immeasurable, and cannot be too profoundly contemplated—too intensely felt. “What can I do to arrest their attention?—to awaken their solitudes?—to enlighten their minds?—to soften their hearts?—to bring them to the Lord Jesus?—to introduce them to the church?—to rescue them from hell?—to prepare them for heaven?—are questions which the faithful minister is continually proposing; and he

is habitually repairing to his Divine Lord, that he may obtain clearer and more realising views of their condition, that he may cherish more earnest and impassioned emotions on their behalf, so that he may form every plan to allure and win them, and that he may be able, under the influence of exquisite compassion, to "long after them all, in the bowels of Jesus Christ."—(Phil. i. 8.)

There is responsibility, on the part of the Christian ministry, especially to *the young*. This is a most numerous class, and multiplying surprisingly. This, also, it is obvious, is a most interesting and important class, and, until lately, it has not been, by any means, sufficiently regarded. The children and youth of our country were, for ages, too much forgotten, and, in innumerable instances, passed by entirely. Their intellectual, moral, and, especially, their religious culture, did not awaken general interest, and secure general and concentrated effort. It is only within the last fifty or sixty years, that the nation has been induced to think seriously and earnestly of the young, and that those benevolent and Christian solitudes for their instruction, their dignity, their happiness, and their salvation, have been excited, and associated with vigorous and combined exertion, which have resulted already in extensive, lasting, unspeakable good.

How wide is the field of labour among the young presenting itself before the eye of the Christian minister,—a field, the value and richness of which will amply repay all the energy, all the toil, requisite for its cultivation! What lovely plants, what fragrant and precious flowers, may he rear in this sacred enclosure, which it will be his delight to tend, and over which it will be his incumbent duty to watch most anxiously, that nothing may impair them, or deface their beauty. The responsibility of the ministry, in relation to the children and youth of the empire, is boundless, and it ought to be daily felt with increasing power and intensity.

Their numbers—their dangers—their peculiar temptations

—their neglect by parents and guardians—the multitudes among them rising into life ignorant of the Gospel, unacquainted with the Saviour, unprepared for temptation, unfitted for the service of God, must show the Christian minister that it is not only unwise, and unsafe, for him to neglect the young, but that he disregards them at his peril. They are the lambs he is to feed. They are precious jewels of which he is to take care. They constitute a part of his flock which he can never neglect, without great sin being committed, and great hazard being incurred. Positive and irreparable loss must be sustained—loss, the extent and importance of which, cannot be adequately estimated.

The young constitute the hope of the church, and the fairest crown of affectionate, persevering, and holy ministers of Christ, who feel interested in their behalf, and who labour unceasingly for their happiness and salvation.

Thus we might proceed enlarging on the responsibilities of the Christian ministry—its vast responsibilities, at all times, in all places, under all circumstances, in connexion with all classes. A due regard, however, to the proportion of the various parts of this Essay prevents amplification here. It is most evident, from the statements of inspiration—from all the impressions and convictions of the servants of Jesus Christ—from the history and labours of the Saviour and his apostles—and from the proceedings and transactions of our churches,—that the responsibilities of those who are called to labour for souls, “as they who must give account,” will never, can never, be adequately estimated in this world. When eternity is unveiled—when we stand before the bar of God—when the overwhelming scenes of the last judgment shall be witnessed—when we shall observe the ecstasy of those who are saved through the blood of the Lamb, and hear the piercing shriek of those who are consigned to the regions of misery and despair, to dwell eternally with “the devil and his angels,” then, and *not till then*, if we sustain the office of the ministry, shall we fully realise the magnitude and

responsibility of that undertaking to which, while on earth, we professed to be entirely devoted.

6thly. View the Christian ministry, in the claims urged on it by the aspect and peculiarity of the age.

Those claims are urged, at the present period, with marked earnestness and power. There never was a time, in the history of our country, or of the world, when the claims of the people on the intelligence, fidelity, energy, and well-directed efforts of the Christian ministry were presented with greater vividness, or enforced with greater spirit and power, than at the period in which we live; and these claims are most pressing. They must not be unheeded. They must be seriously pondered. They must be promptly met. They must be readily and fully discharged. If they are neglected, much guilt will be incurred, the most extensive injury will be sustained, and hundreds of thousands of immortal beings, who will soon appear before God, may perish.

Mark the claims urged on the Christian ministry, by the *increase of the population*.—What accessions are continually being made to our numbers! Every day—every hour—what additions to the vast mass of intellectual and immortal beings! In our cities, large and crowded towns, how is the catalogue of human existence swelled during every month! In the metropolis, what an augmentation have we in the course of a year—nearly fifty thousand are born annually in London. Now, is not this amazing increase of the population a great fact to be regarded—to be profoundly contemplated—to be diligently improved—by us, and, especially, by those sustaining the office of the Christian ministry. If the people are so rapidly and universally multiplying, then, the demands on the time, attention, solicitude, and concentrated energies of the ministers of the Word are becoming increasingly pressing and momentous.

Mark the claims urged on the ministry, by the *diffusion of knowledge*.—This excites our surprise, as much as any

circumstance to which we can recur. It is wide, rapid, universal, and constantly increasing. Never was there a time, when information of every kind was more generally or swiftly circulated than at the present stirring period. It is conveyed with electric rapidity. The press, with its gigantic power, is always employed, and its million productions are communicated to all parts of the empire, the continent, the world, with more than winged speed. Cheap publications, on every subject, adapted to the tastes, capacities, and habits of all classes, are continually issuing, by thousands and hundreds of thousands, from the printing office; and, while many of them are intelligent, sound, excellent, and truly Christian, how much is there that is superficial, trashy, sceptical—at variance with truth—repugnant to pure Christianity, opposed to the true dignity of man? The diffusion, then, of cheap multitudinous publications, at the present period, adapted to the capacities of all, and a large number directed immediately to the *youth* of the empire, can never be disregarded by the Christian ministry. The power of the press is now amazing and inconceivably great. Its influence, for good or evil, is gigantic, is unbounded. It must be narrowly watched. Every effort must be made by the ministers of the Gospel to check its corrupt tendency. By the principles which they inculcate—by the appeals which they deliver—by the cautions which they express—by the spirit which they breathe—by the conversation in the parlour which they indulge,—and, especially, for the benefit of the young, by the sound and valuable treatises which they publish—and by all the legitimate and well-directed influence which they can exert, it must be seen how anxious they are, that, while information is diffused widely, it should be correct in the sentiments conveyed, important and beneficial in the results produced;—that errors should be counteracted—that impurities should be removed—that inuendoes against Christianity, and infidel representations, should be exposed—and that every thing calculated to injure the mind,

mislead the judgment, and impair the true happiness of individuals, of families, of nations, should be presented in its true aspect, and held up to public scorn and execration. These, it is obvious, are no ordinary claims urged most impressively on those who fill the office of the ministry, and they cannot be disregarded by any who sustain the character of public and Christian instructors, and whose moral and religious influence may be felt by the *entire community*, without the utmost peril being incurred, and irretrievable loss, probably, being realised, not merely by thousands, but even millions of those, who, if early and wisely warned, might have become the ornaments of the church, and of the empire.

Mark the claims urged on the ministry, by the *spirit of infidelity* which is abroad.—We raise no cry of idle alarm. This would be unwise and improper. Still, we fear, we believe, indeed, we know, it is palpable to every one who observes, who reads, who is anxious for the advancement of true religion, that there is much scepticism abroad—vigorous and deeply-rooted scepticism. A state of mind which disregards the Divine character and government—which repudiates the claims of the Redeemer—which laughs to scorn the requirements and obligations of the Bible—which pours contempt on Christian holiness. Go where we may—visit whatever towns or cities we feel disposed to enter, and morally to inspect—mingle with the human family in any district, however sequestered and thinly-peopled, or animated and populous—and we find how much scepticism is developed—practically exhibited. There is a subtle, disingenuous, and plausible spirit, of infidelity, and a sly and cowardly opposition to the Christian religion, cherished by numbers of our intelligent and able men, who are degrading and prostituting their intellectual faculties, by speaking, or writing, against the spiritual requirements of the Gospel, and their efforts of this character are continually exerting their baneful and withering influence. We see this spirit in our newspapers, some of which command an amazing circulation—in

many of our cheap periodicals—and, also, in not a few of our larger and more powerful magazines and reviews—in eloquent essays—in elaborate dissertations—in brilliant poems. Do not these facts—these mournful facts, urge themselves, with commanding power, on the attention and regard of the ministers of the Gospel? This infidelity must never be neglected or trifled with by *them*. They must meet it. They must expose it. They must brand it. They must show it to be as baseless, as it is injurious—as empty, as it is degrading and withering—as opposed to man's dignity and happiness, as it is to God's truth, and God's honour. The enlightened and faithful ministers of Jesus Christ must remember that they are “set for the defence of the Gospel” —they must evince that they are “valiant for the truth,” in opposition to error in all its forms; and, by their regard for the Divine glory—by their concern, especially, for the best interests of the young—and by their desire to exemplify the true spirit of their office, they must urge a bold, an intelligent, and an unceasing testimony against the infidelity of the present age, whatever its assertions—its assumptions—its unblushing representations—or, in many instances, its formidable power.

Mark the claims urged on the ministry, by the *encroachments of the world*. Observe how worldly avocations and pursuits occupy the attention; how worldly pleasures are followed; how worldly society is courted; how a worldly spirit is cultivated; how worldly objects and considerations absorb the mind. There never, perhaps, was a period when the world was more generally regarded, or exerted a more powerful and soul-subduing influence than it does at the *present* hour. It is Trade—Trade! Mammon — Mammon! Speculation — Speculation! Pleasure — Pleasure! which are continually operating with increasing and tremendous power: and the injury sustained, by the absorption of the mind and energies in secular pursuits, and the consequent deterioration of the character, is extensive and fearful. The world has the supreme regard.

To gain money seems to be the sole object of life. Religion is viewed as a matter of secondary importance, if it be not treated with absolute indifference; and, even though a Christian profession, in numberless instances, has been made, the world stands in the way, to obscure all, to impair all, to neutralise all. The world has mournfully entered *the church*, taking away its high and holy character—robbing it of its beauty, its lustre, and its power. There is little separation, in innumerable quarters, between the church and the world—little decision of character is exemplified—little superiority of mind to worldly property and worldly pleasures is evinced—little spirituality is unfolded. How few there are, even among Christian professors, members of churches, who have “their conversation in heaven,”—who regard themselves as “strangers in the earth,”—and who are diligently and supremely seeking and aspiring after, “a better, that is, a heavenly country.” Now, it is the cultivation of this worldly, sordid, and grovelling temper, which so seriously affects the interests of the soul—which checks, to such an extent, the progress of the Gospel—and which paralyses the influence and efforts of the Christian ministry. It must, therefore, be dissuaded against, in the boldest and most earnest manner. Its folly, its danger, its extreme sinfulness, must be laid bare. The admonition of the evangelist John must be reiterated again and again, and proclaimed in tones of the deepest solemnity and fervour, “Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him.”—(1 John ii. 15.) The ministers of the Gospel must make all their legitimate influence and power to bear against the encroachments of the world. It is impoverishing the church—it is withering the labours of the servants of God—it is marring the beauty, most fearfully, of the Christian profession, and ruining multitudes of souls.

Mark the claims urged on the ministry, by the *desecration of the Sabbath* at the present period. This is notorious to

every devout observer, and, in many districts of our country, it is perfectly appalling. We fear, too, that it is continually increasing, after all the instruction communicated — all the restraints imposed — all the moral influence exerted — all the ministerial efforts made — all the Christian example presented. Though there is, happily, great regard paid, by multitudes of our countrymen, to the observance of the Sabbath; though, by thousands, its sacredness is felt — its institutions are celebrated and prized — its holiness and spirituality are maintained — and its value, and the priceless benefits connected with it, are, in some degree, appreciated, — yet, how many millions are there, at this hour, who live as if there were no Sabbath, no Soul, no God, no Eternity! The Divine appointment of the Sabbath is never regarded by them. The express injunctions to sanctify the Sabbath are never obeyed by them. The awful denunciations which are uttered against those who refuse to hallow the Sabbath are not felt by them. They are perfectly unconcerned. The returning Lord's day is, with multitudes, throughout the empire, a day of idleness, or trade, or worldly pleasure and festivity. How many there are who sleep away its choicest hours! How many thousands there are who devote the day to visiting and idle gossip! How many spend the greater part of the day in perusing newspapers and cheap periodicals! How many there are who uniformly travel on this day! During the spring and summer, how are coaches laden — railway trains filled — steamers crammed with passengers, on this day! London alone sends out its hundreds of thousands, for purposes of pleasure exclusively, on this day. The ordinances of religion are, consequently, fearfully neglected, and the ministers of the Gospel mourn and weep before God, for "the slain of the daughter of their people." Nothing grieves them more bitterly than to perceive how extensively the Christian Sabbath is profaned — how it is desecrated in the most wanton and criminal manner, as though it were no sin whatever; — as though no

guilt were incurred, and no danger or punishment would result. The day is given up to the world—devoted to folly, vanity, and sin, with surprising recklessness; without any thought, any pause, any inquiry whatever. And can we wonder that so much ignorance of religion prevails—that so much vice abounds—that so much misery is experienced? Can we wonder that children grow up to be utterly indifferent to the sacredness of the Lord's day, and that they greedily pursue those pleasures, at this hallowed period, in which their guilty parents delighted? We should, indeed, be surprised, were any other results to flow from such conduct. With what amazing power, therefore, are the claims of the Christian ministry urged on us, when we contemplate the desecration, the awful desecration, of the Sabbath, by the people at this hour. It is a consideration which must never be unheeded by those who are appointed to "blow the trumpet in Zion, and to sound an alarm in God's holy mountain." They must warn the people continually, and in the most impressive manner, against this sin. They must expose its enormity. They must show that it is a glaring, deadly evil. That it is associated with every thing that is degrading, perilous and criminal. That it greatly dishonours God—that it debases the character—that it unfits for life—that it ruins families—that it brings down the blight and the curse of heaven—that it will infallibly terminate in destruction. Ministers! ministers! every where, lift up your voices, in the loudest manner, against the violation of the Sabbath. Because of the general commission of this iniquity, the land is defiled—the land mourns!

Mark the claims urged on the ministry, by the *intemperance* which prevails. This is our national sin. This is our national curse. It impoverishes, not only thousands, but millions. It deforms and blights the character. It ruins multitudes of families. It renders innumerable wives and mothers wretched in the extreme. It clothes tens of thousands of children in rags. In a word, it entails nothing

but degradation and inexpressible misery. The intemperance which abounds at this period in our highly-favoured country is most awful; and, we fear, it is increasing every hour. Nothing is more obvious, and at the same time more mournful, than this appalling evil. Not merely is it exhibited in our crowded cities, in our populous and stirring manufacturing towns, but even in our retired villages, in our most remote and sequestered hamlets,—and what are the natural, the unavoidable results? The most wretched habits are formed, and inveterately cultivated. The health is injured. Domestic order, tranquillity and comfort are destroyed. Education, both intellectual and moral, is neglected. The house of God is deserted. The ministers of the Word are ill-sustained, and their usefulness considerably checked and narrowed. The progress of the Gospel is impeded, and ten thousand evils are experienced among all classes of the community—and, especially, in relation to the immortal soul—by the passion for strong drink which prevails—by the gross and awful intemperance of millions, at this hour. Wherever we go, we find, as ministers of Jesus Christ, that this monster evil is presenting itself, in all its deformity and gigantic power, to cripple our efforts, and to paralyse, to a great extent, the benefit of our plans and labours. It devolves, then, on us, not only to mourn over the existence of intemperance, and its baneful effects developed on every hand, but seriously and earnestly to consider, that it is this which starves our churches, impairs our congregations, lessens our day and Sabbath schools, and most materially diminishes the advantages of our preaching, our visitation of the poor and the sick, and our ministerial efforts generally. The claims urged on the Christian ministry by the intemperance of millions are most earnest, and they are constantly accumulating. We dare not neglect them, else our character will suffer—our churches and congregations will suffer—our schools will suffer—the honour of our Divine Master will suffer—the happiness of multi-

tudes will suffer. How ardently do we desire that this gigantic evil may be crushed ; then, what changes should we perceive, not merely through society generally, but in connection with our schools and houses of prayer ! Results the most glorious would follow ; an impulse would be given to the cause of education, morals, and religion, the most extraordinary in its character. Our ministrations would be remarkably appreciated and blessed ; and “ God, even our God,” would be abundantly glorified. Let us, therefore, as the faithful ministers of Christ, labour long, and importunately pray for the arrival of this auspicious day !

Mark the claims urged on the ministry, by the *laxity* of *morals*, and the impurity, which abound. In numberless instances, it is palpable that there is little or no regard paid to modesty, decorum, or habits of virtue. All restraints are removed, all the decencies of life seem to be abandoned, nothing that is chaste or pure is delighted in. Youthful delicacy is set at nought. The bonds of connubial fidelity and love are repudiated and despised. This is no overcharged, and, sure we are, it is no *unnecessary*, representation. It is painful, inexpressibly painful, to dwell on the laxity of morals, which abounds in our villages, our large towns, our crowded cities, at the present period—and, especially, among the young. It is fearful to contemplate it, and we cherish the apprehension that it is augmenting continually. Now, under these circumstances, so mournful and deeply affecting, what is to be done ? Is it to be unheeded ? Is it to be seen, daily and hourly, with indifference ? Is there to be no special prayer presented—no special effort put forth, that this laxity of morals may be checked, and that purer and happier results may issue ? God forbid ! The Christian ministry must exert all its influence—furnish all its calm, enlightened, and faithful appeals—employ all its solemn and awakening remonstrances—express all its scriptural and pointed rebukes—pour forth all its earnest and impassioned prayers—communicate all its invaluable

instruction—and prosecute all its diligent and holy exertions, in order that this fearful evil may be diminished—that a different, indeed, a totally opposite, state of things may be induced:—that all which is virtuous may be followed—that all which is pure may be esteemed and desired—that all which is morally and evangelically beautiful may be attained. The Christian ministry must not sleep at its post, when impurity and gross immorality are ruining hundreds of thousands, and, especially, of the young men and young women of the empire. Corresponding and unceasing efforts must be made, to save numbers of them—to bring them out of the path of the destroyer—to “pluck them as brands from the burning.” No exertions of the ministers of Christ will be more benevolent, valuable, or important, than these.

Mark the claims urged on the ministry, by the efforts which are now being made to *educate the people*. This is one of the most important and delightful considerations which can be regarded by the Christian ministry. The education of the people, now, is to be conducted on the largest scale—on the broadest basis. None are to be forgotten, none are to be excluded, none are to be permitted to remain, year after year, in a state of utter intellectual darkness. Light is to be poured into the minds of all. Instruction is to be communicated in the freest, and most unrestricted manner. This is a characteristic and happy feature of the age in which we live. Schools for all ages, and all classes, even the most ragged and squalid of the population, are everywhere established, and they are multiplying perpetually. Education is ably conducted, in a philosophical and superior manner; the terms of instruction are adapted to the pecuniary circumstances of all; and the intellectual and moral training, in many of our schools, is most admirable and efficient. The march of education, within the last ten or fifteen years, has been surprisingly great, and it will exert a most powerful and commanding influence on the national mind and character. Christian ministers

cannot observe these movements, in connexion with the education of the people, with indifference. They must rejoice in them. They must do all to accelerate them. They must regard them as being identified with the diffusion of truth, and the consequent diminution and suppression of error. They must see how closely these efforts for the instruction of the people, and the rising generation especially, are associated with the acceptance, prosperity, and efficiency of their own labours. How much better is a state of intellectual light, than one of intellectual darkness ! How much more desirable to have a people prepared for us, by early and sound mental discipline, than to have them coming to us with the understanding uncultivated, and the judgment unfitted to distinguish and discriminate. Still, it devolves on the Christian ministry to watch these educational efforts very narrowly ; to observe their character, their tendencies, their results—to see that they are truly enlightened—that they are resting on a broad and scriptural basis—and that they will issue in the extension of Christianity, and the high and permanent welfare of the people. The nation must not merely be educated ; it must be educated *on right principles*—those of pure and vital Christianity ; and it devolves on the ministers of the Word to see that this *is done*, else the truth may be checked—error may be diffused and perpetuated—and a train of calamities may follow. Their vigilance, then, in relation to the educational efforts of the age, must be sleepless and unceasing.

Mark the claims urged on the ministry, by the number of valuable societies now in existence, for the melioration of the condition of the human family, and for the extension of the Gospel throughout the empire and the world.—There never was a period, when so many excellent institutions were established, and carrying forward, with energy, their benevolent and important operations. Man, in poverty ; man, in a state of physical suffering ; man, in ignorance ; man, in a condition of intellectual imbecility, or aberration ; man, un-

acquainted with the Gospel, with the Saviour, with the value of the soul, with “the world of eternity,” is regarded, most compassionately and earnestly regarded, by those noble institutions which now so extensively abound, which give a *special* character to the age, and which constitute the *glory* of our country. And there never was a period, when our Tract—Bible—and Missionary Societies were commanding greater attention—accumulating larger pecuniary resources, or exerting a wider, or more beneficial influence—an influence felt by persons of every age, in every country, and even at the remotest parts of the earth. When we dwell on the millions of Christian tracts annually issued—on the thousands of neat and standard religious volumes every month sent forth into all lands—on the myriads of Bibles and Testaments, at the lowest possible price, in all languages and dialects, poured forth into nearly all countries; when we recur to the valuable schoolmasters—catechists—printers—translators—and missionaries—conveyed to all parts of the globe, and simply to *do good*, without any sectarian or exclusive object being regarded; when we ponder the fact, of several great societies raising each more than *one hundred thousand pounds* annually, we are not only delighted—we are astonished—almost overwhelmed. But how all these facts—these stirring and extraordinary circumstances—bear on the Christian ministry!—increasing its engagements—augmenting its responsibility—and requiring it to be more vigilant, enlightened, energetic, benevolent, and devoted, than ever:—until the light of the Gospel shall be everywhere diffused—the heralds of salvation be everywhere sent—the word of the Redeemer be everywhere proclaimed—the happiness of Christianity, and the priceless blessings of Messiah’s reign, be everywhere enjoyed. How the Christian ministry should hail, and must hail, if its true spirit be exemplified, that blissful era—that inconceivably glorious period, when all “the nations shall walk in the light of the Lord;” when the Saviour shall “reign from sea to sea—from the river to the ends of the

earth ; ”—when, in a word, the kingdoms of this world shall be transformed into “ the kingdoms of our God, and his Christ ! ”

7thly. View the Christian ministry in the mode of its exercise among Congregational Dissenters.

This is marked by its *simplicity* and *inartificial* character. There is no elaborateness, no pompousness, no affectation, no pretension—all artifice, in opposition to what is natural, plain, and ingenuous, is studiously shunned. The Congregational ministry, in the discharge of its functions, has no external and imposing attractions. There is no glare, nothing to attract the gaze, and excite the wonder of the ignorant and unthinking multitude, who are struck with what is showy and dazzling. There is no unnecessary, meretricious, and unscriptural finery, or splendour.

The Congregational ministry, in its exercise, is, also, characterised by the *absence of form*.—There is nothing imposed. No restraints coerce. No fetters bind and gall. There is no Shibboleth which every minister is required to pronounce, in the same particular way. There are no liturgical services to be adhered to, under all circumstances, without any deviation, to narrow the range of prayer, and, often, to check the flow of devout and holy feeling.

The Congregational ministry, in its exercise, is distinguished by its being *theological* and *evangelical*, in distinction from that which is merely moral or controversial.—The great doctrines of the Gospel—the simple and beautiful announcements of Christ and his apostles—the invitations of redeeming love—the precepts of the New Testament—the admonitions, directions, encouragements, and promises of Revealed Truth, clearly explained, affectionately and persuasively inculcated, faithfully and earnestly applied, are the matters, the *primary* matters, to engross the attention, elicit the best feelings, and concentrate the energies of those who are called by the Head of the Church to exercise their ministry among Congregational Dissenters.

The exercise of the Congregational ministry should be, moreover, highly *devotional*, in contradistinction to any thing that is secular or cold, critical or uninfluential. The specific object is to do good to the soul—to raise the soul from earth to heaven—to induce an elevation of thought, feeling, and desire, which must exert the most hallowed and sanctifying influence. Thus a devotional aim regulates and controls all—a devotional spirit warms all, absorbs all—a devotional tendency characterises all. Thus is it marked—thus is it beautified—thus is it blest.

Those who exercise their ministry among Congregational Dissenters are expected to maintain *freedom* in their *preaching*.—They are to be dictated to by none. They are to be fettered, or crippled, by none. In the selection of their subjects, in the mode of their presentation and enforcement, they must be perfectly unrestricted, and at ease. This is their right, which they claim, and the slightest interference with which they at all times loudly deprecate, regarding such interference as being not only most undesirable and unwise, but most degrading, and most improper. They preach and labour as the Lord teaches and enables them, without being controlled or interfered with, by any *human dictation* or *human authority*. They dispute the right of any to interfere with them in the legitimate and scriptural exercise of their ministry.

Those who discharge the duties of the Congregational ministry are expected to excel in extemporaneous prayer. To give utterance spontaneously to their best feelings at the throne of grace; to express their holy and fervent desires for the enjoyment of temporal and spiritual blessings by themselves and congregations, and the Church of Christ universally, without being hampered by any form, or chilled by the monotonous and invariable return of any liturgical service. Free prayer, in opposition to forms of prayer, constitutes a prominent feature, and also a peculiar charm, of the Dissenting ministry. Congregational pastors should enter the

pulpit imbued with a devotional spirit, under the influence of the love of Christ, and cherishing warm attachment to their people, that they may appropriately remember them at the mercy-seat—that they may fervently solicit grace, happiness, and salvation, on their behalf—that they may express their deep solitudes for the prosperity of Zion, and, especially, that sinners may be renewed by the power of the Saviour's grace; and, while preferring this extemporaneous and affectionate prayer, they endeavour to adapt their petitions to the diversity of character, and variety of condition, intellectual and moral—temporal and spiritual—by which their congregations are marked. This freedom of prayer we consider to be one of the greatest charms, and, also, one of the richest blessings, in connexion with an evangelical and holy ministry among Protestant Dissenters. It has been disliked by some, and grossly misrepresented by others; but we regard it as one of the most important advantages associated with Congregational worship—a feature of our polity in which we ought to glory—one identified with our independence—our adherence to the word of God—the spirituality and extension of our churches—the unction, power, and efficiency of our ministry.

Those who exercise their ministry among Congregational Dissenters are expected to conduct their ministrations, in all their parts, under the influence of *deep and eminent spirituality*. In reading the Scriptures—in leading the devotions of the public assembly—in proclaiming the word of eternal life—in addressing the young—in directing the anxious inquirer—in receiving candidates for communion into the church—in visiting the poor, the sick, the dying—and in attending to all the minor duties of their office, it is expected, and required, that deep-toned spirituality, a *truly heavenly frame* of mind, should beautify and sanctify the performance of all their engagements. Without this, they will have no acceptance, and command no weight, among the people of God associated with the church. With-

out this, their right arm will be withered. Without this, no unction from the Holy One can be expected to rest upon them—no blessing from above to result from their labours.

Those who exercise their ministry among Congregational Dissenters are expected to discover uniform and vigilant attention in *explaining the word of God*. It is their great business—their main employment—to preach the Gospel—to expound the truth; to illustrate, enforce, and apply the doctrines, and, pre-eminently, the distinguishing and vital doctrines of the New Testament. They are to be diligent, holy, indefatigable students of the word of God, that they may resemble “scribes well instructed in the mysteries of the kingdom”—that they may bring forth, out of the well-furnished treasury of their minds, “things both new and old,”—that they may, as servants of the most high God, show to the people “the way of salvation”—that they may be the honoured instruments of instructing the ignorant in those subjects which relate to their immortal happiness—directing the earnest inquirer after the Lord Jesus—reclaiming the wanderer from the fold of God—consoling, edifying, and inciting “those who have believed through grace”—and “saving many a soul from death, and hiding many a multitude of sins.” This is to be their supreme and unceasing object, and it is expected, among Congregational Dissenters, that their ministers, if they excel in anything, will excel in the clear and accurate explanation—in the ready and appropriate application—and in the powerful enforcement—of the Word of Life. Congregational ministers deem it their highest privilege to preach Christ, as he is unfolded in the Gospel—to invite sinners without limitation or restriction—and to be continually crying, with all the fervour and affection they are able to discover, “Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sins of the world!”—(John i. 29.)

Those who exercise their ministry among Congregational Dissenters are expected to administer the ordinances of

Baptism and the *Lord's Supper*, as the two great institutions of the primitive Church. They are to receive the infant children of believers, and dedicate them in the sanctuary, by the presentation of solemn prayer to God, remembering that the promise is made not only to parents believing in Christ as the Saviour revealed in the Gospel, but, also, to their offspring.—(Acts ii. 39.) They are to take infants in their arms, and, in imitation of the compassionate Redeemer, commend them to the Divine care and tenderness, that there may be an *early* blessing from heaven communicated to them; and though there is a diversity of opinion among Congregational pastors, some considering that *all* children, *indiscriminately*, should be received—and others that *only* the children of *believing parents* should be baptised—still, all of them are convinced of the *scriptural character* of the ordinance—all recognise its observance—and all appreciate the design and importance of the institution. They should discover kindness, love, and fervour, in administering the ordinance, and feel extremely anxious that its nature should be understood, and its object carefully regarded; and few things, we are persuaded, take a deeper hold, both of parents and immediate relatives, than to see their minister and pastor, with their beloved infants in his arms, affectionately and fervently dedicating them to God the Saviour, in the ordinance of Christian baptism.

Then, Congregational pastors are expected to administer, with regularity, and the utmost devotional feeling, the Lord's Supper, to the members of their respective churches. The ordinance is celebrated *monthly*, by the church *collectively*. The first Sabbath in the month is the period generally fixed upon. In some places the afternoon is appropriated to this interesting purpose. In a few churches, the evening of the Lord's day is thus spent; but, generally, and, we think, with great propriety, on the *morning* of the Sabbath is this sacred institution observed—immediately after a solemn and appropriate sermon has been delivered, which should have

a *direct tendency* to prepare the mind for the spiritual celebration and enjoyment of the holy ordinance of the Christian passover.

The rule in Congregational churches respecting admission to the Lord's Table is, to require *no terms* of communion but those which the *Word of God prescribes*—faith in Christ—genuine repentance—a sincere desire to consecrate the heart to the Redeemer—to leave the world—to prepare for the kingdom of glory, and the evidence of sincerity distinctly furnished. This is what all Congregational ministers require, prior to the proposal of any candidate for Christian communion; and no person, taught by the Spirit of God, and desirous of obeying the Saviour, can object to this. It is wise; it is scriptural; it is safe; it is satisfactory to the regular and devout members of the society. The formalist—the pharisee—the hypocrite—the worldly—the lax and inconsistent professor—must be kept out of the fold of the good Shepherd. And when any candidate is fully received by the assembled church, he is welcomed as a friend—regarded as a brother in Christ. The motto and governing principle of young ministers, with regard to the admission of members to the church, should be this,—to receive all into the society who *have received the Saviour*, and who are furnishing *distinct evidence* of the *sincerity* of that reception.

It is, finally, expected and required, in relation to Congregational ministers, that a *holy life* should seal, beautify, and bless all. Holy principles must regulate. Holy tempers must be cherished. Holy conversation must be maintained. Holy habits must be formed. Holy conduct must be exemplified. An unholy minister among Congregationalists—and we utter it to their *lasting honour*—is neglected—avoided—repudiated. Great excellence of character is demanded; indeed, superior and eminent piety is always expected. Congregational churches, worthy of the name, are not satisfied without it. It is this elevation of character, this eminent devotedness to God, which will

prepare the minister of the Gospel for studying and proclaiming the Word. This will aid and enkindle his devotions in the closet, the family, and the church. This will impart singular moral loveliness to his spirit and conduct continually. This will ever draw down the Divine benediction, and will be associated, at all times, with the efficacy of those ordinances which are administered, and of those momentous instructions which are inculcated. Without it, there may be, on the part of a minister, extended acquirements, fine talents, commanding oratory—still, the *main* thing will be wanting. There will be no moral beauty—no spiritual life—no Divine unction—no saving power.

CHAPTER II.

THE QUESTION ANSWERED, "WHAT CONSTITUTES A LEGITIMATE CALL TO THE CHRISTIAN MINISTRY?"

THIS is a most significant inquiry—one which requires to be most calmly and seriously pondered by all those who are thinking of entering on the ministerial undertaking. It is a question from which they must never shrink. It must be reflected on by them in the most dispassionate and prolonged manner, accompanied with earnest and importunate prayer to God, for that "wisdom which cometh from above," that all requisite direction may be afforded—that no false step may be taken, which may involve in difficulty, and encircle with danger throughout the whole of life—be an occasion of deep and unceasing personal sorrow, and be productive of great, and perhaps incalculable, injury to others.

How, then, is a legitimate call to the Christian ministry to be clearly ascertained? We say, *clearly* ascertained—in so definite and decisive a manner, as that there may be no mistake occasioned—no suspicions respecting the propriety of the step taken be induced—no fears awakened that God has been dishonoured, and that we have entered, or are about entering, on the most sacred calling in which any human being can be engaged, for which we were never, by Divine providence, designed, or, by Divine grace, qualified.

There are many errors, obviously, to be removed. There are many mistakes to be corrected. There is much precipitancy to be avoided.

It often, very often, we fear, occurs, that the grave question—"Am I intended—immediately designed—by the Head

of the Church, 'the Lord from heaven,' to enter the ministry?" 'is never seriously and earnestly regarded by a candidate. There is no minute and devout examination of the Scriptures, to learn their statements and injunctions on this subject. There is no fervid and importunate prayer to ascertain definitively the will of God. There is no calm and patient waiting for the Divine purposes to be unfolded—for the Divine arrangements to be clearly exhibited, which is obviously so desirable—so necessary.

Many who are strongly desirous to become ministers of the Gospel, are *very rash*. There is not long and careful thought—prudent inquiry—dispassionate and thorough examination of the work itself—of the spirit essential to the appropriate execution of the undertaking—of the intellectual and high qualifications indispensable to its honourable fulfilment—of the difficulties and trials associated with it—of the responsibility uniformly connected with it—of the results, the momentous results, ensuing from the discharge of its inexpressibly solemn duties. On thoughts like these—inquiries so pertinent, so grave, so necessary as these—how many are there who never suitably dwell! They rush into the ministry without due meditation and prayer, without frank and modest conference with that intelligent and discriminating judge of mind and character—a holy and judicious pastor; and, in too heedless and precipitate a manner, they commence preparing for the fulfilment of its arduous and honourable duties—duties, the difficulties and responsibilities of which can never be adequately estimated.

Many, desirous of entering the ministry, are inflated with *vanity* and *self-conceit*. There is a too-exalted, *high* opinion of themselves—of their elocution—of their manner—of their acquirements—of their abilities—of their capacity for imparting instruction—for exciting interest—it may be, for doing good. There is nothing that is sober, unaffected, unpretending. No modesty is discovered by them. Were

they, in a correct and unassuming manner, to estimate their powers—were they to inquire what view of themselves, their acquirements and capacities, is entertained by the wise and good, who are well acquainted with them, they would not think of entering the ministry at all; but would, at once, shrink from it, impressed with the conviction of their unfitness for the work. A high and inflated opinion of themselves, however, blinds the mind—warps the judgment. They are not sensible of their deficiencies. Hence they presume to enter the ministry, under the influence of a self-inflation, discovered through the whole of life, neutralising their efforts, and rendering their labours unacceptable to the intelligent, and offensive to the truly pious.

Many are desirous of entering the ministry from impatience of occupying a *public and an influential station*.—They are dissatisfied with anything that is retired or quiet; a situation of privacy does not comport with their views. The engagements of business, the avocations of ordinary life, do not harmonise with their feelings and desires. They want to excite public attention—to command a certain degree of public interest—to secure popularity. A post of influence and importance is that after which they aspire; and, on this ground, under the influence of these unworthy sentiments, they regard the Christian ministry; and desire, eventually, to enter on its high functions. They, evidently, do not understand its true character—appreciate its importance—comprehend the arduousness and responsibility of its engagements—else, they would not only hesitate to come forward, but would instinctively shrink from presenting themselves; feeling, most sensibly, their own littleness, and extreme unworthiness of the honour. They would cry, “Send, Lord, by whom thou wilt send!” Like Saul, when sought for to be appointed king of Israel, they would “hide themselves,” from modesty, humility, and natural reluctance to come forward, “among the stuff.”—(1 Samuel x. 21, 22.)

This, however, is not their disposition. Lofty and ambitious views govern their procedure. There is much of pride in the temper which they cherish; a spirit as diametrically opposed to the ministerial character and office, when rightly contemplated, as any to which we can refer. It is, then, of the utmost moment that candidates for the Christian ministry should clearly see, that it is not from impatience of occupying a public and influential station that they are solicitous to enter on those studies which are requisite, prior to the full engagements of the pastorate being discharged.

Many are induced to think of entering the ministry, from the *injudicious and overweening opinion of a few friends*—kind and amiable, but inconsiderate and unwise.—They may be *relatives*, anxious for the respectability, advancement, and usefulness of one with whom they are closely connected. They may be *intimate acquaintances*, who form a partial and exaggerated estimate of the talents—the intellectual and religious qualifications—of one with whom they are familiar, and to whom they are attached. They may be *members of a Christian church*, with which one is associated of whom they entertain too high an opinion, and respecting whom they are too earnestly and improperly desirous that he should enter the ministry.

There may, even, be ministers themselves—for we have known many pastors, and superior, too, as preachers—men of intelligent and discriminating minds—who have been *precipitate* in wishing young men, some attached members of their flock, to think of the Christian ministry. There has been a want of good sense—of wisdom—in their procedure. They have communicated with them, on this momentous subject, too soon. They have encouraged them to come forward, without due reflection. They have expressed an opinion, with regard to their acquirements and qualifications for the work, which has not been eventually sustained;—and, in this way, many young men have become candidates for the ministerial office, whose minds have been, by no

means, of that character which could have been desired; and who have not unfolded those intellectual and religious endowments, for the efficient discharge of the duties of the pastorate, which are always so desirable, and, pre-eminently, in relation to the present age. Pastors cannot be *too careful* in recommending young men as candidates for the Christian ministry. They should be long and thoroughly acquainted with them. They should be familiar with their early history. They should know well the structure and peculiarity of their minds. They should ascertain if their health be sound—if their constitution be vigorous. They should be able to state, that their spirit is humble — bland — affectionate — generous. They should be satisfied that their piety is not only sincere and unaffected, but that it is *exalted*—and that their *only desire* is to live for the glory of Christ. If this care be discovered in the selection and recommendation of candidates, then, no unwise step will be taken, no precipitancy will be apparent, no unsuitable and ill-qualified young men will be brought forward; and, really, this consideration is of the utmost importance, and must be regarded more than ever. We want a higher standard of mind and character for the ministry now, than at any former period; and none must be recommended rashly. It is easy to nominate candidates, but we want those of the right kind—those whom the Saviour selects—whom the church will approve—who will illustrate and “magnify” their office—who will “make full proof of their ministry.” It is easy to multiply students—to fill our Colleges with aspirants for ministerial labours and honours; but, if they are not selected with wisdom and care—if they are not sent by God himself, they had much better not be recommended and sent at all. Our Colleges had better remain comparatively empty, if they are not occupied by intelligent, devout, persevering, holy, untiring students, who are preparing with all their energies for the ministerial undertaking.

These are some of the mistakes to be corrected—some of the errors to be avoided—some of the evils to be remedied. They are mistakes into which candidates for the ministry often fall; errors which acquaintances, friends, members of churches, often discover; and a want of judgment and care in the selection and recommendation of young men for the ministerial office, with which even many pastors are chargeable.

When perusing the lives of eminent ministers of Jesus Christ, few things have struck us more powerfully, than to mark the timidity, the reluctance, even the trembling, with which at first they thought of the work of the ministry, from a deep sense of the sacredness and responsibility of the office, and of the arduousness and magnitude of its duties, in connexion with a prevailing impression of their own unworthiness, and of their unfitness for a work so momentous in its character, so vast and awful in its consequences. They have been almost afraid to entertain the thought of entering the ministry. They have vigilantly guarded against anything like self-will, boldness, and presumption. They have been most anxious not to choose for themselves, nor to take a single wrong step, and their solicitude on this point has daily and hourly increased. There has been no necessity to discourage them—they have discouraged themselves. They have checked themselves again and again; lest uncommanded, or with unhallowed hands, they should touch the ark of God.

When Doddridge waited on Dr. Edmund Calamy, to solicit his advice and assistance respecting his being educated for the ministry, which had always been his great desire, the Doctor gave him no encouragement, but advised him to turn his thoughts to something else. The amiable and holy Doddridge observes:—"It was with great concern that I received such advice; but I desire to *follow Providence, and not force it*. The Lord give me grace to glorify him, in whatever station he sets me; then,

“Here am I, let him do with me what seemeth good in his sight.”*

That excellent and devoted minister, the Rev. James Hinton, of Oxford, had the propriety and desirableness of his directing his thoughts towards the Christian ministry suggested to him by the two deacons of the church with which he was connected, at Chesham, men of godly wisdom; and they found *considerable difficulty* in inducing him to entertain the suggestion. Yet, he did not reject their counsel. His thoughts were intensely engaged with the interesting theme, and he felt so much desire as engaged him to apply with unusual diligence to the improvement of his education; but he did not mention his wishes to any person for nearly two years; and, at length, he spoke, with *much trembling*, to his mother, in the course of a journey on horseback. To his timid and hesitating communication, she calmly replied, “Yes, James, I have been reckoning upon that.” He was struck with astonishment at this answer, for it seemed as though she had read all his heart, on a point respecting which he had preserved the most fearful secrecy; but, after his surprise was past, it served to encourage his hope that his views were acceptable to God.†

That most promising young man, the late John Griffin, of Exeter, when contemplating studies for the ministry, thus clearly and beautifully expressed himself:—“I think *that* life the most desirable which is most useful. I pray, and trust you will pray, that I may be made more anxious to know, and to walk in the right way, than in my own way; and that the will of God, and the finger of his providence, may guide, and *not my feelings*. I feel deeply convinced of the necessity of patiently waiting and watching, and should *dread the idea* of having the weight of a minister’s load of cares increased by the reflection, that self-will has forced me out

* Orton’s invaluable Life of Doddridge.

† Memoir of Hinton, p. 16 and 17. An admirable piece of biography.

of the path of duty, and through the barriers which Providence may have erected around me. I know that, however congenial to present feelings any line of conduct may be, novelty soon loses its attraction; and when the hand of pressure is removed, the spring will rebound with double force, and that nothing but grace and principle can sustain the shock. But my hope is, that the path of duty will be found to terminate in the accomplishment of my desires, and that I shall be enabled from experience to tell the people of God, that the Christian's language is, 'Hitherto the Lord hath helped me.'” *

Thus timid, cautious, and tremblingly solicitous, have the devoted servants of Jesus Christ ever been, when they first contemplated entering on the ministerial undertaking. There has been no wish for publicity, or popular applause. There has been no rashness—no obtrusiveness—no impatience of the work—no pushing themselves forward to excite attention, and to induce those holding official and important stations in the church to think of them, and to bring them out,—quite the reverse. They have concealed themselves. They have suppressed their dearest thoughts and strongest feelings, even from their bosom friends. They have been most unwilling, for a long time, to make a disclosure; and, when it has been made, it has been done in the most unassuming, timid, trembling manner, as though they were presuming improperly—as though they were regarding their own feelings and predilections, and not the will of God—as though they were stepping out of their place, and incurring the disapprobation of conscience, as well as the displeasure of heaven; and they were ready to say with Moses, when the Lord called him to his arduous and distinguished office, “Who am I, that I should go unto Pharaoh, and that I should bring forth the children of Israel

* Griffin's Life of his Son. An instructive and beautiful volume for young ministers; a graphic portrait of a most amiable, cultivated and holy mind.

out of Egypt? O my Lord, I am not eloquent, neither heretofore, nor since thou hast spoken unto thy servant; but I am slow of speech, and of a slow tongue. O my Lord, send, I pray thee, by the hand of him whom thou wilt send." And they have required the positive assurance given to him, "*Certainly*, I will be with thee."—See Exodus iii. 10, 11; iv. 11, 13.

These have been the emotions, the early and deep impressions of the most useful and honoured servants of the Redeemer, when the propriety of entering on the ministry has been suggested by others; however excellent and well qualified, or when they themselves have been induced to anticipate the work, and commence a course of systematic study, prior to the regular fulfilment of its duties: and they have been anxious, intensely anxious, to have their call to the office *made manifest*, so that they might not enter upon it, without the express warrant and sanction of Scripture, and without having the enlightened and decisive testimony of their own judgments, that they had not chosen for themselves, but that God himself had chosen them to the work, and had, by his Spirit, prepared them for it.

Let, then, every candidate for the ministerial and pastoral office ponder well the inquiry, "What are the steps by which a young man should be led into the ministry?" In reply to this question, we remark, there should be, on the part of a candidate for the ministerial office,

I. *Early and deep convictions* that the Lord has *designed* him for the work.

We do not mean only that there should be general, or occasional desires, even though those desires be often ardent in their character. There are many, very many young converts, who, at an early stage of their Christian career, cherish desires for the ministry. This is a state of mind which is almost natural to the young and glowing believer. There is an affectionate and intense solicitude to be labouring

for Jesus Christ. There is genuine piety, there are strong desires for the ministerial undertaking; and expression, too, may be given to those desires; and yet, it is obvious, with regard to many cherishing these emotions, that God himself has never designed them for the sacred office. They do not possess the characteristics which candidates for the ministerial employment ought to unfold, especially at the present period; and they require to be checked, *at once*, wisely and decidedly, instead of being encouraged. They are so; and they see, eventually, that their pastors and judicious friends acted with great prudence and kindness, in discountenancing them from entering on studies preparatory to the work. Where there is a *real* call to the ministry, there will not merely be general, or occasional desires; those desires will be distinct, intense, absorbing, unceasing. They will glow within, and *nothing* will be able to extinguish them. These desires will spring from deep, enlightened, and often from early convictions that the Head of the Church has designed those cherishing them for his immediate and public service. In whatever situations they are placed—whatever studies they may pursue, whatever proposals may be made to them, they will find these desires to be operating within them—these convictions to be working secretly and silently, yet with great power.

Some seem to have been designed by Divine Providence for the office of the ministry from the *earliest* period. From comparative youth, there has been a development of eminent piety and consecration to God—the manifestation of peculiar tenderness and sweetness of spirit—the discovery of wisdom far beyond their years—an earnest solicitude to be useful, to glorify the Lord Jesus—and an early combination of fine and superior qualities,—all which have clearly shown that the Redeemer *designed* them for his own work, and intended them to be specifically and entirely engaged in his service.

So it was with Richard Baxter—with John Howe—with

Janeway—Flavel—the Henries—Albert Bengel—Isaac Watts—and a host of devoted and honoured ministers who have laboured so efficiently, and with such signal demonstrations of the Lord's approval, and whose character and writings will ever be fresh and fragrant, and command the admiration and reverence of the wise and good, until the latest period. The convictions of the above honoured men, and hundreds like-minded with themselves, that they were *intended by God* for the ministry were early and deeply-seated. They grew with their growth; they strengthened with their strength; until they were led, by one event and another, into the vineyard of the Lord. How naturally and beautifully the early convictions and desires of a most interesting and devoted young man were expressed to his judicious and honoured father, in relation to the ministerial office:—

“MY DEAR FATHER,

“After many anxious feelings, I am induced, from our conversation yesterday, and your wishing to know my mind as to a situation, to disclose what I had resolved not to mention yet—my earnest and abiding desire after the work of the ministry.

“It has now, for a considerable time, been a subject of very great anxiety to me. It has, I trust, been the cause of much earnest prayer, and deliberate consideration. I can conscientiously say, that my desires do not arise from my being dissatisfied with the profession I am in; for, till the period when my views were first directed towards this object, I was warmly attached to it; and I do now feel, that, were it not for this, I should not only be happy in it, but should greatly prefer it to anything else. But I now find that I cannot be happy in any *secular* employment, or look forward into life with any pleasure, but as connected with my being *entirely devoted to the service* of Him who, I trust, hath loved me, and died for me. I *dread* to indulge such desires *uncalled* and unqualified. I feel willing and desirous to wait the will of God, and the guidance of Providence; but I possess an *unalterable wish*, and shall now feel, in some measure, relieved of a burden, having unbosomed my feelings to a father, who, with the greatest affection, will enter into them as his own. Praying for the teachings of the Spirit on so important a subject,

“I am, your dutiful and affectionate Son,

“JOHN GRIFFIN, Jun.”

After perusing such an epistle, what enlightened and Christian father could fail to hope that the Spirit of God had been silently but efficaciously operating on the mind and heart of his son, and awakening and maintaining holy and fervid desires for the ministry of the Gospel, which, in the Lord's infinite wisdom, would be abundantly realised? Let, then, every aspirant for the sacred office of the ministry seriously inquire, have these intelligent and devout desires—these early and profound convictions—these intense and holy solitudes for the ministerial undertaking been mine? or have my desires only been general, superficial, occasional, transient?

There must be, on the part of a candidate for the ministerial office,

II. Fervent prayer for Divine direction, that he may take *no step without God*.

It must be his first and last desire, to place himself under the guidance of Infinite Wisdom, and the control of Infinite Love. In relation to a work of so much importance as that of the ministry—a work whose engagements are pregnant with results inexpressibly momentous, and eternal—he must form no plan, make no movement whatever, without “setting the Lord” immediately before him. His unceasing petition must be, “Lord, what wilt thou have me to do? Shall I take any step or not? Shall I go forward or not? Shall I wait, or act at once? Or is it Thy will, in relation to this great undertaking, that I should not act at all? Thy voice shall be mine. Thy will shall be mine I have no disposition whatever, in a matter of such transcendent importance, to think, decide, or act, for myself. Wilt thou, O God, choose for me? If it be Thy counsel and Thy pleasure, that I should not labour as one of Thy called and devoted servants, in the ministry of Thy Son, then let me serve and honour Thee, in a private station of worth and usefulness.” This should be, and must be, if right views

and feelings are entertained, the spirit of every candidate for the sacred office. No other is appropriate—no other is scriptural—no other will be regarded by God, or prove acceptable—no other will secure a blessing. An enlightened and intense desire to have the finger of God pointing out the path in which the candidate is to proceed, must be, in every instance, cherished. Without it, there will be no light from heaven given; no safe and happy conduct furnished; no acceptance and usefulness vouchsafed; no honour conferred in glory, at last.

If a young man be designed by God for the ministry, He will lead him to pray, earnestly and continually, yet with the utmost submission, for Divine direction, and that direction will be afforded. There will be “the pillar of cloud” to guide him, and to show him his way. God will answer prayer, in a striking, and, often, in a remarkable manner. Difficulties will be removed out of his path. Deep anxieties will be allayed. Fears will be dispersed which have proved to be most trying. Provision will be made which is desirable. Requisite aid and encouragement will be communicated; and it will be seen, in the most decisive manner, that God himself has influenced the mind of his young servant; awakened within him strong and irrepressible desires for the ministerial undertaking; induced him to prefer importunate, but submissive, prayer, that the will of the Saviour might be made manifest, and so made apparent, as that his course may be obvious, and his mind may be at rest. Thus the call to the ministry will be ascertained, and in such a way as that *no mistake* can occur—*no uncertainty* can be experienced.

Let no candidate, then, presume to enter on the sacred work of the ministry, without presenting this devout and importunate supplication to God, for the directions of His Word, and the explicit developments of his will. They will be furnished, if prayer be sincerely offered. God, in his good time, will reply, in a very clear and decisive manner.

And, should the ministry be entered on, having the sanction and express authority of Heaven, there will be assistance in the discharge of its engagements continually afforded—direction amidst its difficulties continually furnished—support and consolation from above, in the endurance of all its pressing solitudes and trials, continually vouchsafed. Thus the mind will be rendered tranquil—the labours of the ministry will be conducted with acceptance and pleasure—and the Lord Jesus will be abundantly honoured.

Prior to a young man entering on studies preparatory to the ministerial office, there must be

III. The *favourable opinions* of *Christian ministers—and of enlightened and judicious Christian friends*; and this opinion must be *decidedly* expressed, from intelligent and deep conviction, and after thorough personal acquaintance with the candidate for the sacred office.

This is not only most desirable and important, but *absolutely necessary*—that obtrusiveness and presumption may be appropriately checked—that the rash and heedless aspirant to the ministerial undertaking may be wisely and effectually repelled; in a word, that those who are obviously unfit for the office, and never designed by the Head of the Church for it, may be restrained from coming forward. It is a desirable barrier to raise, to prevent any from entering the vineyard, whom the Great Vinedresser does not himself send there, to labour entirely for Him.

Besides, the enlightened opinion of ministers and Christians, in this important business, is most necessary, that some may be *induced* to step forward—that encouragement may be given to real merit—to superior talent—to distinguished piety—associated, in many instances, with much modesty. A disposition, so retiring and unobtrusive, that the utmost effort is often requisite to prevail on the persons to whom we refer taking any step, making any arrangement, arriving at any decision. Their views of themselves, of

their acquirements, their abilities, their piety, are so unassuming;—they are so self-distrustful—that they require not only to be encouraged by one, but exhorted and entreated, again and again, by many, prior to their making any decisive movement.

We like this spirit. It is the accompaniment, generally, of superior endowments both of mind and heart. It is a spirit which ought to be encouraged and appreciated—one which the church will value—which the Saviour will honour—which God will crown.

It is very desirable, then, that no candidate for the ministry should think of entering on those studies which are preparatory to the work, and essential to the full and honourable discharge of its engagements, without having the sanction—the decided and cordial recommendation of *his own pastor*, who is acquainted with his intellectual and religious character—with the marked bias of his mind, the peculiarity of his disposition—he having probably grown up under his ministry. No wise and holy aspirant for the sacred office can possibly be indifferent to the value and importance of the calm and favourable testimony of his judicious and experienced pastor. Besides, it is very desirable, frequently, that the opinion of enlightened and devout *friends* of a candidate for the ministry should be solicited and obtained. Our motto with regard to a decision for the ministry is, “Let nothing be done by a young man rashly or unadvisedly.” Let the opinion of the wise and good around him, and who have long known him, be ascertained—be spontaneously and definitively expressed. Let the will of God, in this way, be made manifest. In a matter of such tremendous import, a candidate must not presume to act merely on his own responsibility. He must see, as it were, with the eyes of others—hear with the ears of others—think and act as the result of the opinion of others, older, wiser, and more qualified to come to a right conclusion, on a subject of such importance, than he himself. Be it always remembered by a

candidate for the ministry, that others are generally *much better judges* of his fitness, or unfitness, for the office, than himself. They are more sober—more enlightened—more discriminating—more just. A young man, therefore, who is thinking of the ministry, must never disregard, or despise, in relation to this matter, the grave, deliberate, and devout opinion of the judicious, experienced Christian, and of the elders with whom he is acquainted, and who have a deep insight as regards character, as well as “the things of the Spirit of God.” Candidates for the ministry! proceed in this manner, and the will of God must be made known. If called by the Saviour to the work, it will be legitimately and scripturally ascertained. There will be no mistake—no uncertainty. You will be governed, not by your own unaided and too favourable judgment, but by the honest, unbiassed, and enlightened opinions of ministers and friends, who have known you for years, and are well qualified to judge. Ponder well the following sentiments of an able writer:—“Those who have concluded hastily, or whose minds have proceeded to the act of self-dedication (to the work), by a shorter and more direct course, are frequently found, in after-life, *to doubt their own call*; not a few such have been known to sink under difficulties, and some to retrace their steps to private life, or a secular calling. Let no man rashly ‘put his hand to the plough,’ neither let him regret the severity or the length of the incipient trial, since it is manifestly adapted to impart stability to his resolution, and to cheer every future scene of his ministry with the exhilarating consciousness of being ‘called of God, as was Aaron.’ —Heb. v. 4.”

Previously to a young man entering the ministry, there should be,

IV. The *approval of the church* with which he is associated.

Every intelligent and right-minded candidate for ministerial

labours will deem this exceedingly desirable and valuable, and he will be anxious to gain it. It will command weight with the professors and examining committees in our Colleges. It will give additional emphasis to the recommendation furnished by others. It will be a decisive testimony from the truly pious, constituting a section of the Church of Christ, with regard to talent, and general excellence of character and conduct. In a word, it will show, very often, in the clearest manner, that a young man has been designed for the Christian ministry by the Chief Shepherd himself. We would recommend *every candidate* to secure, if possible, the unpurchased and spontaneous recommendation of the church with which he has been, probably, for years, connected. It will be an enlightened and emphatic voice from heaven—"Son, go work to-day in my vineyard." It will impart great encouragement to one thinking of the ministry, and who is ardently desiring that the will of God should be made known. It will evince what others, who have long been acquainted with him, who have marked his gifts and graces in the church, are disposed to testify respecting him; and thus it will be an assurance, not only to him, but also to those judicious and holy men before whom, in one or more of our Colleges, he may appear, of surpassing value and importance. He will see, and they will perceive, that he has not moved of his own accord; that he has taken no step in his own wisdom, or in his own strength, but that he has anxiously sought to be guided and controlled by that portion of the Church of God with which he has been, for some period, identified. When that truly excellent and honoured servant of Christ, John Cooke, of Maidenhead, was first awakened and enlightened by the Holy Spirit, there was a longing of soul to tell the Gospel message to others, which would not be appeased, and which made all the labours of his school an unwelcome and irksome drudgery. His religious connexions, however, at Woburn, where he resided, soon endeavoured to relieve his mind from all embarrassment

on the point of duty, by *unanimously* expressing their approbation, and by *formally inviting* him to engage in the Gospel ministry. As a member of the Church of Christ at that place, it was *deemed proper* that he should receive the sanction of that Christian society, and be publicly called, *in their name*, to the work of preaching the Gospel. This was, accordingly, done, at a meeting of the church, when Mr. English, the pastor, delivered an address to his young friend, and solemn prayer was presented, by which the young man was dedicated to the work of an evangelist.*

And if it be most desirable that *every* candidate for the ministry should have the explicit sanction and recommendation of the church of which he forms a part, it is *pre-eminently* so that *the son of the pastor*, if intending to enter the sacred office, should have, *in addition* to his father's approval, the judicious and decisive approbation of *the society*.

The delicacy of a minister, whose son is anxious to dedicate himself to the service of the sanctuary, is often very great. He wishes to act in the wisest and safest manner. He is afraid of being unduly anxious respecting his child, and of discovering partiality in his decision. He thinks and feels that he can strongly recommend his son, in respect both of piety and promising abilities, still he desires not only to be satisfied *himself*, but that *others* may be satisfied too. He, therefore, makes a solemn appeal to the church, soliciting their unequivocal testimony—so that the call of God may be fully ascertained. How wisely the intelligent and devout Mr. Hall, of Arnsby, acted, with regard to his distinguished son, Robert Hall! During the summer vacation, in 1780, while remaining at home, his father became fully satisfied that his piety was genuine, as well as that his qualifications for the office of a preacher were of a high order. He, therefore, expressed to many of his friends his desire that he should be set apart to the sacred work. Yet,

* Vide Life and Remains of the Rev. John Cooke, by Dr. Redford, pages 36, 37; a volume of inestimable worth to all ministers.

solicitous not to be led aside from a correct judgment, by the partiality of a father, he resolved that the church over which he was pastor should judge of his son's fitness, and recognise their conviction by a solemn act. The members of the church, *after cautious and deliberate inquiry*, ratified the decision of the anxious parent, and *earnestly and unanimously* requested "that Robert Hall, jun., might be set apart to public employ,"—and, eventually, he was set apart by their lifting up their right hands, and by solemn prayer.*

Mr. Griffin, of Portsea, behaved with equal wisdom, in relation to his accomplished and amiable son. When the deacons of the church had heard John Griffin, jun., preach, or engage in public service, his father requested their unbiassed opinion, and that of the church, and was rendered happy by the subjoined testimonial:—

"We, the undersigned deacons and members of the Church of Christ in King-street, having read the answers which Mr. John Griffin has given to the above questions, proposed to him by his father, and having heard him either speak, or preach, or pray, in public, are of opinion that he is justified in entering on a course of studies preparatory to the ministry, and that his father *is right in giving encouragement* to his desires. As his father, our minister, from the delicacy of the case, feels an objection to give his *unsupported* recommendation to the academies into which he may enter, we most cheerfully place our signatures, in testimony of our sentiments, and earnest wishes on his behalf." †

This simple and beautiful testimonial was signed by *all* the deacons, and what could be more satisfactory to the father, what more encouraging to the son? What could evince more clearly than *such* a procedure, and *such* a testimony, that the young candidate was designed for the ministry by the Lord Jesus himself?

Let every minister who has a son desirous of studying for the sacred office, and of whom he forms a high judgment,

* Vide the Life of Hall, by Olinthus Gregory, LL.D., pages 12, 13, small octavo. One of the ablest and most instructive biographies, for a Christian student and minister, in the language.

† Life of John Griffin, jun., pp. 189-190.

act in a similar manner; and let every young man, so situated, place himself in the hands of the church, that his call to the work may be demonstrated.

If a young man be designed by God for the ministry, there will be

V. *A series of providential circumstances* decidedly leading him, not only to think of the work, but showing him that it is the path of duty for him to prepare for the work.

These circumstances, often, will not be remarkable, but they will be *significant*. They will arrest attention. They will excite deep interest. They will awaken his most intense solicitude. They will induce fervent and increasing prayer. There will be an articulation given to the will of God, evincing to a young man, in connexion with whose history they are taking place, that the Lord designs him for public and official service, and that he has the onerous and responsible duties of the Christian ministry for him, eventually, to discharge.

Frequently, however, the call to the holy ministry will be made palpable to the candidate, and to others, by a concurrence of *striking* and *unusual* circumstances, most decisively and signally unfolding what is the will of God. So it was with regard to John Bunyan, whose Divine call to the work was remarkably demonstrated. So it was in respect of John Newton, whose early history is most impressive; and the concatenation of events by which he was ultimately led into the ministry, excite equally our surprise and interest. So it was in relation to Claudius Buchanan, whose life, and especially his early career, is a vivid and fine illustration of the special providence of God, directing the servants of Christ—leading them step by step, and preparing them for laborious and honourable service. So it was with that noble specimen of a minister and missionary, Henry Martyn. Who that reads his valuable life can doubt that the Head of the Church intended him to work, for a short time, most suc-

cessfully, in his vineyard—or that the providence of God designed him to labour in India and Persia? There is no necessity, however, minutely to particularise: the instances are innumerable.

By the faithful, devoted, and eminent servants of Jesus Christ, the will of God has been definitively ascertained—and, in early life, especially, they have seen the providence of God leading them, powerfully and resistlessly influencing them—controlling one circumstance and another—moulding their character by a succession of striking events—so that prayer has been answered—the Scripture has been, in their experience, significantly fulfilled—and they have been as certain that God has called them to the ministry, as they have been of their own existence.

How often, when a young man is intended by God for the Christian ministry, and for eminent service and usefulness, is there an evident *unfitness* for *business*! There is not only a distaste for commercial transactions—for secular pursuits—but a positive and growing aversion. The mind cannot fix on them. There is no tact, no aptitude, for business. The utmost effort may be made, but the bias, the disposition, will be directed into quite the opposite quarter, and, whatever the wishes of parents—the solicitations of friends—or the pecuniary advantages which may be held out—all will be unavailing. The mind will be otherwise engaged. The world of commerce will not be its home. The occupations of ordinary life, however interesting and stimulating to multitudes, will not concentrate its faculties. Think of such minds as those of John Howe—Richard Baxter—Isaac Barrow—Jeremy Taylor—or Robert Hall, being occupied with commercial engagements—*absorbed* in the transactions of business, prior to their entering the ministry! We can scarcely conceive that such a circumstance could be possible. John Howe having, at any time, a taste for worldly business?—Isaac Barrow earnestly pursuing secular avocations?—John Owen taking an interest in matters of

trade?—Impossible! Not that we would depreciate commercial engagements, when temperately and wisely followed—or undervalue any young man who comes from the shop, or the counting-house, to an academic institution to go through a course of training for the ministry. Quite the reverse. Indeed, some of our ablest and most efficient preachers and pastors have, in early life, been much occupied with business, and very subordinate secular pursuits. What we mean simply to convey is this, that, where the Lord designs for the sacred office, there is *often* a distaste for business transactions—and an utter inaptitude for their fulfilment. No tact—no relish—no success;—and it is demonstrated, eventually, in the clearest manner, that God had other work for his servant to accomplish.

Besides, when there has been a Divine call to the sacred office, how have *difficulties* been removed out of the way! Those difficulties, frequently, have been complicated and formidable. They have awakened intense solicitude. The heavens above have appeared to be as iron and brass; but the Lord signally manifested himself. His providence has been demonstrated. “His arm has been made bare”—cloud after cloud has been dispelled—one embarrassment after another has been taken out of the way—one enemy after another has been silenced, or converted into a friend. The most adverse occurrences have been seen to have been most wisely ordered—and all have turned out, eventually, to facilitate the entrance of the devout and holy candidate on ministerial employment, and have conduced to his satisfaction and advantage, when he has been regularly discharging the duties of the pastorate. Pecuniary supplies are furnished—kind and steady friends are unexpectedly raised up—the mind is relieved from pressing solicitudes—and prayer is strikingly answered—demonstrating, that when God designs any for the public service of the church, difficulties will vanish—His purpose will be accomplished—His pleasure will be made known.

The case of the youthful Doddridge is one of the most striking illustrations. About three weeks after he had been discouraged by Dr. Calamy from thinking of the ministry, he had thoughts of entering on the study of the law, to which he was encouraged by the celebrated Mr. Horseman. He recommended him to a counsellor, Mr. Eyre, who made him some very good proposals, and he was *just on the point* of determining to settle with him. But, before he returned his final answer, he devoted one morning solemnly to seek God for direction; and while he was *actually engaged* in this suitable exercise, the postman called at the door, with a letter from Dr. Clark, in which he told him that he had heard of his difficulties, and *offered to take him under his care*, if he chose the ministry on Christian principles, and there were no other that, in those circumstances, could invite him to such a choice. "This," observed Doddridge, "I looked upon almost as *an answer from Heaven*, and, while I live, shall always adore so seasonable an interposition of Divine providence. I have sought God's direction in all this matter, and I hope I have had it."* Thus God often appears for his young servants—removing their difficulties—allaying their anxieties—suppressing their fears, and bringing them forward into the ministry, step by step, with infinite wisdom, and "in a way which they know not." Thus the validity and the Divine origin of their call to the sacred office have been made so plain to themselves and others, that there has been no uncertainty respecting their induction to the work by God himself.

In addition to the previous observations, it must be obvious that, prior to a candidate for the Christian ministry commencing studies preliminary to the full discharge of duty, there should be the *distinct* and *early development* of some of those *high qualities* which are at once desirable and necessary for the appropriate and honourable execution of the engagements of the pastorate.

* Vide Orton's Life.

It is indispensable that there be clear, experimental, and realising views of Divine truth—the possession not only of genuine, but of superior and eminent piety—intense and compassionate solicitude for the souls of men,—a heart bleeding at the sight of souls, immortal souls, “perishing for lack of knowledge,”—and ardent zeal for the glory of Christ Jesus, in their final and eternal deliverance from death and hell;—a glowing desire to *live* to the Saviour, and assiduously to labour to be useful in the ministerial office, satisfied with no other station, however honourable and exalted—with no other employment, however lucrative. There must be cherished, by every candidate for the sacred office whom God calls, a simple, a supreme concern for the honour of the Redeemer, and the happiness and salvation of souls. An anxiety for usefulness will be the prevailing feeling, *the one* passion of the soul—the object habitually regarded. Everything will be subordinated to it. This will warm, impel, fire, absorb every young man desiring the pastorate, in whose breast the Holy Spirit awakens the desire. This will be the flame burning steadily and inextinguishably within him. Wherever there are the qualifications to which we have concisely referred,—as their fuller illustration will subsequently engage our attention,—in connexion with the other circumstances on which we have been dilating in this chapter, it is very apparent to every holy pastor, and to every enlightened Christian, as well as to the candidate himself, that there is the Divine appointment to the ministerial undertaking—that the voice is not of man but of God. Presumption has not been indulged, precipitancy has not been discovered. Vanity has not operated. A desire to occupy a genteel, a public, an influential position in society has not controlled; but the simple, the *one* desire has been, to observe the directions of Providence—to mark the call of Heaven—to walk only in that way which infinite wisdom and love might reveal and prescribe.

There ought, then, to be a *clear conviction* of a Divine call

to the work, existing in the mind of every candidate for the ministry. It must be an intelligent—a scriptural—a holy—a deeply-seated—a growing persuasion, that God has designed him for the sacred office. And to secure this conviction there must be a deliberate, enlightened, earnest, and continued investigation of the subject—fervid prayer that Divine guidance may be furnished—patient and exemplary waiting to perceive the call of Heaven fully developed, by the operations of God on the mind and heart—by the opinions and advice of judicious ministers and Christians—and by the leadings of Providence, unfolded, most clearly, by a concurrence of circumstances and events, not only directing towards the work, but “*shutting up*” the candidate to an eventual fulfilment of its duties—an obligation which must be discharged. “A necessity laid” upon the spirit, “which is realised as the burden of the Lord.” An intense feeling pervading “the inner man,” similar to that which absorbed and oppressed the apostle Paul, when he cried—“Yea, woe is unto me, if I preach not the Gospel!”—(1 Cor. ix. 16.)

When these sentiments are cherished—these convictions are felt—these opinions are expressed—these circumstances occur—and when the only desire is to learn the will of God, we are persuaded it will be made known, and in such a manner as that full satisfaction will be afforded. The promise, “I will instruct thee, and teach thee in the way which thou shalt go; I will guide thee with *mine eye*,” (Psalm xxxii. 8) will be delightfully accomplished. The Spirit of God—the voice of the church—and the voice of circumstances—will combine in saying to a candidate—“You are right—go forward! This is the way, walk in it!” And the remark is as judicious as important—“When an individual is thus strongly desirous of engaging in the sacred duties of the Christian ministry—is possessed of the requisite qualifications—and appears to be called by God to devote himself in this way to his service—I conceive he is not only justified

in entering on that office, but that it becomes his *clear and peculiar duty*.”

And how desirable, how essential, candidates for the sacred trust of the ministry, is it for you to be satisfied, fully satisfied, that you are called *by God* to the work, just as though you heard a distinct and positive announcement from heaven. How important for you to be as convinced of the validity, the reality of your call, as was Howe or Charnock—Baxter or Bates—Flavel or Janeway—Philip or Matthew Henry—Doddridge or Watts—Samuel Pearce or Andrew Fuller! Endeavour, we beseech you, to gain this conviction—this satisfaction. If attained, it will wonderfully encourage, assure, stimulate. Do not be rash in your decisions, arrangements, movements. Be prudent, cautious, retiring. God will remove one obstruction and another, and, at length, open an effectual door—and, perhaps, in a way which you never anticipated—to awaken your surprise, to excite your gratitude, to inspire your admiration *for ever*. Ponder well the following sentiments of the learned and holy Dr. Adam Clarke:—

“Endless cases may occur, where man sends, and yet God *will not* sanction; and that man has *no right* to preach, nor administer the sacraments of the Church of Christ, whom God hath not sent, though the whole assembly of apostles had laid their hands on him. God never sent, and *will never send* to convert others, a man *who is not converted himself*. He will never send him to teach meekness, gentleness, and long-suffering, who is proud, overbearing, intolerant, impatient. He, in whom the spirit of Christ does not dwell, *never had a commission*, to preach the Gospel. He may boast of his *human* authority, but ‘God will laugh him to scorn.’ On the other hand, let none run *before he is sent*; and, when he has got the authority of God, let him be careful to take that of *the church* with him.”

A Divine call to the ministry is *every thing* to a candidate; let him, therefore, not *move a step* without it, else he may

damage his reputation—involve himself in extreme difficulty and embitter the whole of life—and, above all, *sow his dying pillow with thorns!* Let your appointment to the Christian ministry be *Divine*, not human—originate not from earth, but from heaven—then “God will bless you, and make you a blessing;” you will walk in the light by which the Redeemer himself surrounds you, and be the highly-favoured instrument of conveying Divine light to others.

CHAPTER III.

THE OBVIOUS AND ESSENTIAL QUALIFICATIONS OF A GOOD MINISTER OF JESUS CHRIST.

IN specifying the desirable and requisite qualifications of the esteemed and useful minister of the Gospel, we shall endeavour to furnish a simple and concise summary. We would recur to great general principles, and guard against anything that is harsh or dogmatic. It is obvious, to every reflective and holy mind, that the standard of ministerial qualification must be *elevated*. There must be no inferiority, either of mind or character, discovered by those who are introduced to the sacred office. That office requires the finest endowments, and the consecration of the noblest energies, in order that it may be scripturally “magnified”—that its full beauty may appear—that its highest dignity may be unfolded—and that its commanding importance and usefulness may be vividly and impressively displayed. The standard of qualification for the ministry is, with many, much *too low*. There are no large, enlightened, and sublime views entertained—no lofty considerations and motives directing, controlling, and absorbing the mind. There is much that is little, narrow, and undesirable, in the judgment which is formed, and in the sentiments which are cherished.

We repeat, however, the assertion, that the standard of ministerial qualification must be high, and higher *now* than ever. Men of ordinary mould are not the men we want. Men of common-place mind, or character, are not the men we desire. There must be some striking superiority, either of intellect or religious excellence, unfolded. There must be a combination of fine qualities possessed, and clearly ex-

hibited; and it must be obvious, without any mistake or uncertainty, that the designation to the Christian ministry is immediately from God. We are aware that there will be a marked *diversity* of ministerial qualification. One star will differ from another, in beauty, magnitude, and glory. The endowments of some of the ministers of Christ are of the noblest and most commanding order. Their acquirements, their originality and power of mind, their fine and impassioned eloquence, all acknowledge—all appreciate—all admire. There is a bright constellation of excellence which fixes the universal gaze—and induces universal admiration. We cannot rationally expect this commanding superiority in all the ministers of the Word; nor, if it were attainable, would it be, perhaps, desirable. Many of the servants of Jesus Christ, of much humbler pretensions, would be more generally useful, especially to the poor and uneducated, by adapting themselves more to the popular mind, than they would be, were they all in possession of the commanding intellectual attributes to which allusion has been made. Besides, the wisdom of God is more distinctly and beautifully unfolded by the present arrangement—by the wide diversity of ministerial character and qualification. There is a striking gradation furnished—one reaching *every* class, and all the ramifications, of society, and by which the purposes of God are accomplished—the Word of God is fulfilled—and the happiness and salvation of man are subserved. Still, while there is this marked and beautiful variety of ministerial character, there are certain developments which *every* candidate for the pastoral office should furnish—there are certain qualities, both intellectual and religious, which it is, at once, desirable and necessary he should possess, and that they should be unfolded with increasing beauty, harmony, and power.

For the guidance and satisfaction, therefore, of all those who are desiring, or who may desire, the office of the ministry, we would now enumerate many of the desirable and

essential qualifications of "a good minister of Jesus Christ." There is one great and vital principle, however, before recurring to several points, which we would broadly and distinctly advance, and which we would express in the words of the Rev. John Newton—namely, "that none but He who made the world, can make a minister of the Gospel. If a young man has capacity, culture and application may make him a scholar, a philosopher, or an orator; but a true minister of Jesus Christ must have certain principles, motives, feelings, and aims, which no industry, or endeavours of men, can either acquire or communicate. They must be given from above, or they cannot be received."

In detailing, after the above preliminary remarks, some of the most conspicuous and essential qualifications for the Christian ministry, we would rise from those which are minor, to those which are more important—from those which are physical, to those which are intellectual, moral, spiritual, divine.

I. It is desirable that a minister should have *good general health*.

This is most desirable in relation to *himself*—that his studies may not be interrupted, or imperfectly pursued—that his spirits be not dejected, and he be, consequently, unfitted for the full and animated discharge of ministerial and pastoral duty. Besides, generally good health is important to a minister's *comfort* and *usefulness*. What disappointment is often occasioned—what complainings are often heard—what diminution of congregations often takes place—indeed, what confusion is often manifested—in consequence of the frequent illness, or, perhaps, the continued indisposition of those, on whose ministrations so many depend, and the *regular* exercise of whose gifts they have been led to anticipate! The health of a minister is of *great moment*, not only to himself and family, but, also, to the Church of Christ over which he presides, and, in many instances,

has not been sufficiently regarded. A candidate for the sacred office should have a sound and vigorous constitution. He will find this of immense service, when he fully commences pastoral labour—and, therefore, he should ascertain, *prior* to his being proposed for the ministry, whether there be any organic disease which may, by sedentary habits, and the confinement which mental pursuits will for years require, break out, and be a serious detriment and injury to him throughout the whole of life.

He should particularly inquire respecting the *soundness of the lungs*, for this is a vital consideration to be regarded by a young minister. An interesting and truly devoted young man, well known to the writer, waited on him one day, and expressed his strong desire, which had been cherished *secretly* for years, to enter on studies preparatory to the Christian ministry. Everything would have amply justified the strongest recommendation, in his case, to one of our academic institutions—but the inquiry was proposed, before he retired, “Are your lungs *sound*?” The tears came into his eyes at once, and he replied—“I fear they are rather delicate.” This I had, for some time, suspected. The remark was then made to him, and it was offered with deep regret, for he was a young man of fine mind and character—“Wait a little—continue your present engagements—and, in the course of twelve months, we shall see what is the will of God.” The advice was wise. He perceived it himself. Decided pulmonary affection eventually presented itself, and he has been long since resting in the grave. Health, to a minister, is of prime importance.

II. It is very desirable that a candidate for the ministry should have a *clear and distinct utterance*.

A good voice is very important to a minister of the Gospel, whose principal employment consists in *preaching* the word. It is a great recommendation to him among *all* congregations, and contributes, materially, to the acceptance, and,

even, the benefit of his public services. When there is a low and indistinct address—hesitation in speaking—difficulty in articulating certain letters, or in uttering certain words, there is a considerable impediment in the way of his approval and encouragement as a minister, and, not unfrequently, of his usefulness.

A clear, bold, full enunciation, so that *all may hear* the preacher, and listen, with pleasure, to the *delivery* of a well-prepared discourse which he pronounces, is much to be desired, and should never be regarded by a candidate for the ministry as an insignificant qualification. There is a great deal, after all which some may advance to the contrary, in *manner*—in the mode in which truth is presented before us; and, without placing undue stress on it, we acknowledge that it is of *considerable importance* for a young minister, and for *every* minister, to be able to express his sentiments in the pulpit in clear, bold, full tones, and with so much freedom and precision as that all may find the attention riveted, and the mind interested. It is palpable, that a natural, distinct, graceful, and unembarrassed utterance in the pulpit, other things being equal, will accomplish much for a young minister; without which, indeed, he would, in many instances, effect but little.

Let, then, the enunciation of discourses be carefully regarded, by every aspirant to the sacred office. We want no stiffness, no primness—much less affectation—in the mode of delivery; but we do desire to listen to a clear, correct, and nicely-modulated enunciation of a sermon. It is pleasing to every hearer, and often produces a deep and delightful impression—one which is not soon effaced.

III. A very desirable qualification for the office of the ministry is *self-possession*.

Indeed, it is not only desirable, but *very necessary* for every minister and for every candidate for the public and continually-recurring engagements of the pastorate. We, of course, do

not mean, by self-possession, undue boldness and positiveness—a rude forwardness and dogmatic mode of address in the pulpit, which would be as unseemly to the intelligent and pious hearer, as injurious in the general effect produced. We refer to a manly confidence, derived from our Master in Heaven, and the message we have to deliver—to the desirable calmness of the mind—to the full possession of its faculties, without which, especially among the Dissenters, there would be a palpable unfitness for the public engagements of the ministry. We have known some ministers so much under the influence of nervousness and extreme timidity, in the prospect of official duty, that they have been perfectly miserable. It has affected their health—taken away their comfort in the pulpit—and disqualified them for the due performance of their engagements. We have known some young men who could *never* command sufficient self-possession to deliver a discourse publicly. They have been, in several instances, young men of superior minds, but they have only been able, after preparing a well-arranged and valuable sermon, to *read* it, and even that has been done with difficulty, in consequence of the want of self-possession—and the more they have tried to have the command of themselves while engaged in public duty, the more have they found themselves to be embarrassed. This has been a great trial to them. It has materially impaired their acceptance—robbed them of their comfort—and diminished their usefulness.

It is well known that the most able speakers, and admirable ministers, feel deeply in the prospect of public ministrations in the sanctuary; still, by endeavouring to rise above men—by committing themselves and their way to the Lord—by relying on the promised aid of the Holy Spirit—by dwelling on the importance of their object and theme—they find that their nervous agitation is diminished, that the perturbation under which they laboured is removed, and that, with calm and collected faculties, they are enabled to proclaim to the people, “the truth as it is in

Jesus." This is the way to gain self-possession in the ministry—and, though not secured at once, it will, in the majority of cases, be attained *eventually*. Cultivate a devotional spirit—form clear and comprehensive views of your subject,—in other words, be master of your theme, and regard not men, but God, and you will find, modest and diffident candidate for the pastoral office, that your anxieties, when you enter on public service, will be lessened—that strength will be imparted "equal to your day"—and that your fears and distressing solitudes will be taken away.

IV. A candidate for the Christian ministry should possess *ability to acquire and retain knowledge*.

This, of course, is *essential* in the case of every one who aspires to the ministerial office. There should be—there must be—a talent for acquisition and retention. Information is to be gained continually, from *all* sources, and deposited in the mind for future and permanent use—for valuable and efficient service; and *all* will be advantageous, *all* will be required which can be accumulated. Languages are to be acquired—an acquaintance with logic is to be gained—history, both civil and ecclesiastical, is to be carefully read—the mathematics are to be regarded—mental and moral philosophy is to be studied—theology must be diligently and profoundly contemplated. There are great facts and principles, and, indeed, innumerable lessons, with which it will be most desirable to be familiar; and, therefore, there must be good general ability on the part of every young minister, for making these acquisitions, and turning them to profitable and important account.

Where there is real ability possessed by a candidate for the sacred office, it will soon be developed. It will be displayed, gradually, in one form or other, and it is most important, at the present period especially, when knowledge is so diffused, and intellectual cultivation is so generally pursued, that all young ministers—that all those who are preparing

for the work of the ministry—should possess good, if not commanding, mental powers; there should be, in every instance, a *decided* taste for study, and a capacity fully developed for acquiring information from *every* quarter, for the ultimate accomplishment of those great purposes to which the life of a Christian pastor is to be devoted. “A preacher,” John Newton observes, “must have gifts as well as grace, to be able to ‘divide the Word of Truth, as a workman that needeth not to be ashamed;’ and, therefore, though the Lord was once pleased, by a dumb ass, to rebuke the foolishness of a prophet, I am not forward to acknowledge those as ambassadors sent by him, however well-meaning they may be, who seem either to have no message to deliver, or no ability to deliver it.” Let the above quaint but significant observation be well weighed by every candidate for the service of the ministry.

V. It is most desirable that a minister, or one designed for the ministry, should be distinguished by *good sense*.

This is an invaluable qualification for every person sustaining the ministerial character—one with which he can *never* dispense—and without which the greatest learning, the finest abilities, the most original powers, in the prosecution of the duties of the sacred office, will not be able to avail. The want of good sense will lessen the weight of the *ablest* ministry, and diminish the impression and effect of the *cleverest* discourses. There is a tact—a discrimination—a niceness of observation—a readiness and spontaneity of correct perception—a promptness in distinguishing between what is desirable or undesirable—what is proper or improper—a caution—a wariness—an habitual avoidance of imprudence, of rashness, of precipitancy—an accuracy of thought and judgment, in having intercourse with his people, and in discharging his regular engagements—which, to a minister of the Gospel, will be found to be inestimable—and which admirable qualities are often of much greater value to him,

and connected with far higher results, than surpassing abilities, *without* their possession. Good sense, to one looking forward to the pastoral office, is of immense importance. It will always be required; and churches and congregations *expect* its development. It will ever be observed and appreciated by the intelligent, the wise, and the good. It will uniformly guide in difficulty, and in circumstances the most critical, painful, and dangerous. It will keep a young minister from taking rash and imprudent steps—from indulging in anything that is erroneous in judgment, or unwise in conduct—anything that would be calculated to impair his reputation—diminish the confidence of his flock—or lessen his usefulness. Nothing should be more desired, or more cultivated, by one aspiring to the pastorate, than the quality to which we now refer. Without it, how many young men, when settled in the ministry, have injured their character—involved themselves in embarrassment—and, in consequence of the want of tact, calmness, and prudence which they have discovered, have offended and pained their most pious and discriminating friends? The late Rev. John Griffin, of Portsea, and Thomas Guyer, of Ryde, two admirable ministers, were pre-eminently distinguished, in pursuing the arrangements and arduous engagements of the pastoral office, by the good sense—the tact—the nice discrimination which they habitually unfolded—and which justified and increased the confidence of their people, and excited their warm approval.

VI. A minister should possess *acquaintance with language*.

That acquaintance should be accurate, philosophical, extensive. What a recommendation it is to a minister! What beauty, and variety, and richness, does it impart to his compositions! How will it aid him in all his investigations and intellectual pursuits! How much it will elevate him in the judgment of the intelligent, the reflective, and those of

superior mind! Indeed, even the poor, and those who are comparatively uneducated, are very discriminating; they soon perceive when a minister is defective, and they are dissatisfied, if he is not able to express his sentiments with clearness, precision, and chaste simplicity.

It is obviously essential that a Christian minister be well acquainted with the *English* language particularly—with its fundamental principles and laws—the derivation—the full and varied signification of its terms—its beauty, copiousness, energy, harmony, and expressiveness. A young minister cannot be too familiar with the *English* tongue. With all its faults, it is a noble language. Its variety, its fulness, its eloquence, its riches, are palpable to all who have made it their close study; and the compositions of our great writers exhibit what purity—what elegance—what vivacity—what majesty—what effect may be secured, by carefully and assiduously regarding it.

A young minister should be conversant with the *Roman* tongue. It is most important, not only as an elegant and necessary accomplishment, and as a source of the richest and most valuable information, but in order that the mind may be invigorated, and that precision and nice discrimination may be imparted to composition. It is characteristic of the best Roman authors that they scarcely give us one idle and excrescent clause, and that they continually convey their meaning in the choicest words. Their fine lines remain in the memory; their noble sentences have the brevity and force of maxims, every part vigorous, and seldom anything that can be changed without injury. A minister derives the *utmost* advantage from the close and discriminating study of the Latin tongue.

A young minister should be well acquainted with the *original languages* of the *Scriptures*. How desirable, how beneficial, to understand them critically—to read them with facility and pleasure! What light will be thrown on the Word of God!—how will the meaning—the signifi-

cance—the full beauty and power of its phraseology and sentiments be brought out—with no uncertainty—with no possibility of error or mistake. If ministers are diligent students of the Scriptures in the original, it is surprising how the judgment will be informed—how the mind will be expanded and invigorated—what acuteness and penetration will be imparted to the faculties—and how materially they will be aided in elucidating, establishing, and applying, the Word of God.

It is very desirable, if a young minister can make the acquisition, that he should be versant in the French and German languages, especially. Great stores of important information will be unlocked, which may be of peculiar value.

This acquaintance, however, with language will require much study—close and continuous application; and it must be *maintained* and *increased*, as well as gained in the first instance; but, if acquired, how extensively beneficial will it prove! What expansion will it give to the understanding! What precision to the thoughts! How will it sharpen the faculties! What superiority will it impart to style—to imagery—to illustrative observations! What finish will it bestow on mental culture! It will soon be discovered, where it is possessed. Its want will easily be observed. No minister of the Gospel can be complete—can be *fully* educated—without that acquaintance with language, and especially the English and Roman, and with the original tongues in which the Scriptures were written, on which we have been concisely dwelling.

VII. A minister of the Gospel should be distinguished by *profound knowledge* of his *own heart*, and of *Christian experience* generally.

This is a high acquisition—one which cannot be too diligently cultivated—and which will be found, by every minister, whatever his age or standing in the church, of transcendent importance.

Knowledge of himself is indispensable. He is unqualified for preaching the Gospel without it—totally unfitted for addressing others, on the greatest of all subjects, with clearness, precision, and sagacity, without its possession. There must be, on the part of every minister of Christ, who would honour his Master, and be useful to others, a correct and profound acquaintance with his own character—with the principles by which he is governed—the motives which are continually operating—the feelings and desires which he is cherishing—the passions by which he is controlled—the objects at whose accomplishment he is aiming—and all the numerous and secret springs of action. A thorough knowledge of himself will be of incalculable value to a minister. It will show him that he must uniformly distrust himself, and induce him habitually to rely on “the Wise for wisdom—on the Strong for strength.” It will enable him to understand and elucidate the Gospel, and lend him essential aid in preparing and delivering his discourses, and discharging all the duties of the pastorate.

In conversing with his people—in visiting the poor and the sick—in directing the inquirer—in comforting the mourner—in binding up the wounds of “the broken hearted”—in counselling and admonishing the sinner—and in encouraging and inciting “those who have believed through grace”—an enlarged and scriptural acquaintance with himself, with the movements and operations of his own heart, will prove of immense and unspeakable importance to him. Indeed, he will be able to accomplish nothing *aright* without it. This is an acquirement, in the case of a minister, of uniform necessity, and of a value not to be adequately estimated. When a man knows his own heart, he knows the hearts of others. When he is acquainted largely with his own character, he can read, to a great extent, the character of others. A minister, forming correct and comprehensive views of himself—of his own nature—is hereby acquainted with the nature of others. He is prepared to

teach them—to direct them—to admonish them—to draw and incite them—or, when necessary, to check them. *No man* should ever think of entering the ministry, without being correctly and largely acquainted with himself. If he do so, he will soon find that he is destitute of a main qualification for acceptance, impression, and usefulness.

A minister, too, must be well versed in *Christian experience*. He must be able to realise the views—to appreciate the principles—to enter into the feelings—to recur to the joys and sorrows—to descant on the privileges—and to dilate on the hopes, the bright and glorious anticipations—of the people of God. It will give peculiar richness—tenderness—persuasiveness—and effect—to his ministrations. There will be a charm—an unction—a “holy sweetness”—about them, which will lend to them a powerful recommendation and influence.

An extended acquaintance, then, with the experience of sincere, and, especially, of ripe and matured believers in Christ Jesus, should be ardently desired, and coveted, by every minister who is anxious to be extensively useful. It will greatly assist him in proclaiming the Word—and impart peculiar beauty to his preaching. There will be nice discrimination of character—all the varieties of Christian experience will be unfolded—and the dignity—the power—the privileges—the blessedness—and the trials of true religion will be respectively delineated, and made to bear, often, with singular effect on his hearers. The ministry of Newton and Cecil—of Berridge and Grimshawe—of Rowland Hill and John Cooke—was exceedingly valuable and impressive on *this ground*, and was rendered, by God, remarkably beneficial.

Ministers of Christ cannot too studiously aim at being persuasive and experimental preachers, and, “out of the abundance of the heart, to let the mouth speak” to the people. A short address of this character is often more interesting and effective than the most polished and elaborate

discourse. When we enter into the cases of our hearers, they are riveted—they are impressed—and there is a silent, yet hearty, response given to our sentiments and representations.

VIII. A Christian minister should possess *appropriate sensibility*.

There should be deep and tender feeling, the result of enlightened and benevolent views, and sustained by high Christian principle. A minister of the Gospel should be no stoic—a man without passion—without heart—hard in his manner—stern in his disposition—unyielding and inflexible. He must show that there is deep feeling—that there is kind and generous emotion. He must evince clearly that he can sympathise with the afflicted—that he can “weep with those who weep, and rejoice with those who rejoice”—that he can comfort those who mourn—“that he can speak, experimentally, a word in season to him who is weary”—that he can pour the oil and wine of celestial consolation into the wounded and suffering spirit. A delicate and tender sensibility, the result of love to the Saviour, and prompted and regulated by Christian principle, imparts great beauty to the ministerial character—inspires the love of the people—and communicates a peculiar and resistless charm. It adds, also, great effect to a minister’s discourses, and all the services of the sanctuary which he has to conduct. While he reads the Scriptures—he feels. While he engages in prayer, he feels, and feels most deeply. While he preaches the Word of Life, his emotions are most genuine, and, often, most intense. It is apparent, from his manner, serious and impressive—from his appeals, enlightened and affectionate—from his exhortations and entreaties, direct, bold, and fervid—that he is feeling most deeply; that he is full of tenderness and love; that he is intensely solicitous on behalf of those to whom he administers the Word of God. How should every minister of Christ cultivate this refined, this

deep, this holy sensibility ! What is he without it ? Where are the life, energy, and effect of his public services without it ? Where is his imitation of the Saviour without it ? Where is his resemblance to the apostles without it ? Where is his love to souls without it ? Where is his compassion for the ignorant—the unconverted—the perishing—without it ? A minister without feeling is a perfect anomaly. How can he do any good to others, who does not show them that he is *concerned* for their welfare—that he is *solicitous* for their happiness—that he longs for their salvation ?

IX. A minister should be marked by a *disposition for retirement and study*.

This should be a characteristic and prominent feature possessed by every minister, and by every one desirous of becoming a minister. He should furnish a practical illustration of that sentiment which is advanced in the Book of Proverbs, chapter xviii. 1 : “Through desire a man, having separated himself, seeketh and intermeddleth with all wisdom.” A minister of the Gospel must be known by his people, and by his brethren generally, not as an idler—much less as a gossip—but as *a student* ; a regular—systematic—laborious—and continual student. It must be his daily and most delightful employment to be exercising and improving his intellectual powers. His mind he must be always enriching. His stores of thought and information he must be always augmenting. His range of observation and inquiry he must be always extending. In a word, he must be putting continually into the mind what is valuable—what he will find to be useful and important ; and he must be assiduously cultivating *all* the faculties ; so that he may be well furnished—and well prepared—for his work. Without a decided and growing disposition for retirement—without the habit of close study—what can a minister acquire ? What can he accomplish ? Where will be the excellence of his sermons ? Where the variety, and instructiveness, and

growing improvement of his ministry? Where the respectability of his character? Where the estimation of the wise and good for him to enjoy? Where his steady and permanent usefulness? We do not, by any means, recommend undue closeness of application—the continual tension of the faculties; this would be unwise, and positively injurious: but we do expect, we do require, that he should be a diligent and persevering student—one resolved to *work* his mind, and see what it will yield;—one who is determined to labour hard in the study, as well as in the pulpit, where the result of his labour—the wisdom and perseverance of his efforts—will be exhibited. Let, then, every candidate for the ministerial office enrich his mind as much as possible—let him gather valuable knowledge from every quarter—and, especially, let him be marked as a student of theology—acquiring correct, large, profound views of Revealed Truth, as unfolded in the masculine productions of our old divines; and let all this knowledge be gained, all these studies be habitually pursued, from love to the Saviour—for the advancement of the glory of Christ—and that his own excellence and profiting may appear to all men.

X. A minister should be characterised by *enlarged and experimental acquaintance with the Scriptures*.

There must be *acquaintance* with the Holy Scripture—clear and accurate knowledge of the Book of God. This is the volume, full of Divine truth, wisdom, and beauty, which he is to be continually perusing. This is the Record of Heaven, which he is to be continually examining. This is the message of infinite holiness—and infinite love—which he is to be continually studying, that he may clearly understand it, and correctly interpret it, for the benefit and salvation of others. The Bible must be the minister's hand-book—the minister's classic; the volume which is always near him—always prized more than any other—that which he is consulting, with the greatest care, and from the warmest love.

His acquaintance with the Bible must be *enlarged*—not partial—narrow—confined to select portions or books. He must go through the *entire field* of Divine Revelation, determined to explore it in its length and breadth, and to observe as many of its beauties and glories as he possibly can. In other words, he must make himself conversant—perfectly familiar, with it. He must be intimately acquainted with the doctrines and facts which it reveals—with the precepts which it enjoins—with the luminous and impressive directions which it offers—with the admonitions which it expresses—with the invitations, so generous and unrestricted, which it tenders—with the exquisite encouragements which it administers—with the promises in which it abounds—with the appeals, the fine and melting appeals, which it furnishes. A minister of Christ must ever show—and it will be soon apparent—that he is *well read* in the Word of God—that it is his manual—his directory—his message—his all; that he lives to study, and explain, and enforce it. His people will very quickly perceive when he is thoroughly acquainted with the Bible—and nothing will be more highly appreciated by them.

Then, the acquaintance of a minister with the Holy Scripture must be *experimental*. The knowledge of the Word of God which he gains must not only be clear, and correct, and full, but realising and influential; while it illumines and enriches the mind, it must operate on, and benefit, the heart. It must be associated with faith in the validity of the testimony borne—with love to the revelation given—with supreme delight in the discoveries made. His language, and the emotions of his heart, must be, “Thy words were found, and I did eat them; and thy word was unto me the joy and rejoicing of mine heart: for I am called by thy name, O Lord God of Hosts.”—(Jeremiah xv. 16.) “Thy testimonies, also, are my delight and my counsellors.” “The law of thy mouth is better unto me than thousands of gold and silver.” “How sweet are thy words unto my taste! yea,

sweeter than honey to my mouth.”—(Psalm cxix. 24, 72, 103.)

Let every young minister, therefore, uniformly regard the Holy Scriptures as the treasury—the unerring standard—the sole fountain—of religious knowledge. “All your springs” are there. There is your message contained. There are your incitements to labour comprehended. There is your consolation furnished. There is your armour described. There are your anxieties and sorrows specified. There is your reward unfolded. Be, then, like one distinguished in the primitive church, “*mighty* in the Scriptures.”

XI. It is most desirable that a minister should be marked by *facility* in *preaching*.

It is obvious that the pen of a minister, especially in the present day, should resemble that of “a ready writer,” and that his tongue should be that of a ready speaker. Not that we would, by any means, or under any circumstances, advocate preaching without thought—without careful and well-digested reflection; still, a facility in preaching the Gospel, particularly if taken by surprise, and if circumstances of difficulty occur, is no unimportant qualification for a minister of Jesus Christ. When we remember the number of sermons which a devoted pastor has to deliver during every week—generally four, and sometimes five or six, or even occasionally more;—when we consider the number and variety of those demands which are made on his time and intellectual energies, and the frequent interruptions to which he is constantly liable—it is, evidently, of no small moment that he should acquire a promptness and facility in preaching the Word. Often will he be required to preach on an emergency—without much opportunity for preparation—and cases may and will occur, when he will be requested most unexpectedly, without any previous notice whatever, to engage in official and important service; and, if he have no facility—no fluency—no readiness and concentration of thought—if he be unable by

theological training—by enlarged acquaintance with Scripture—by the habitual cultivation of devout and holy feeling—to grasp a subject, and discourse appropriately and earnestly on it, how great will be his anxiety—how distressing and obvious will be his embarrassment.

The facility to which we now refer is most valuable to a minister; though it must be, to a great extent, a natural qualification, and requires marked acquaintance with language—familiarity with the Holy Scriptures—and no ordinary degree of energy and self-possession; still, while it is mainly an original qualification, it may be materially improved by close reading and meditation—careful attention to composition—a precise and accurate knowledge of our own tongue—and an earnest desire, breathed to the Spirit of God, to be prepared for every situation into which we may be thrown—and for all the circumstances of anxiety, difficulty, and emergency, in which at any time we may be placed.

Often, very often, will ministers find, in cities and populous towns, and in districts where their services are required during a succession of four or five evenings in the week, in addition to the Sabbath, that, without this facility in preaching the Word, and in delivering addresses at Bible and Missionary meetings, they will labour under great disadvantages, and lose opportunities of considerable usefulness. We regret that many ministers are *so much* engaged—that they can be so little every day in the study—that their course of reading and inquiry is so limited, in consequence of their frequent interruptions, and the number of their preaching engagements. Such, however, is the case with hundreds of excellent and devoted pastors, and, if they had not some degree of facility in preaching the Word, they could accomplish very little.

XII. It is very desirable that a minister should be distinguished by *readiness and fervency in prayer*.

No gift is more valuable to a minister of Christ than that

of prayer—devout, holy, fervid prayer. It beautifies his character. It throws a moral, a celestial halo around him and his office. It, at once, stamps the decisiveness and the eminence of his piety. It endears him to his people, and, especially, the more spiritual among them, and greatly elevates him in their estimation. It induces and maintains among them a devotional spirit. It prepares them for listening to his sermons with attention and pleasure; and, consequently, there is no gift which a minister of the Gospel should more assiduously cultivate than freedom and readiness in prayer—a devout and heavenly frame of mind expressed, naturally and spontaneously, in prayer. Simplicity and ease of language—promptness in giving utterance to suitable and scriptural petitions—a pleasing and dignified facility in leading the devotions of the people—in expressing their wants—their sorrows—their joys—their gratitude—their desires, before the Lord—must be regarded as being a most important qualification for every minister to possess.

When one devoted to the sacred office is ready, comprehensive, unembarrassed in prayer, what a recommendation it is to him! what emotions does he awaken! what interest is he the medium of conveying! what impressions of the best, the holiest kind, are often produced on the minds, not merely of hundreds, but of thousands!

Fervency in prayer should, also, be uniformly discovered by a minister. There must be no coldness when leading the devotions of the people—no want of animation and holy energy, when imploring the Divine mercy on their behalf. There should be intense solicitude expressed, to realise the promised blessing—fervid emotion must be unfolded while bearing the people before the Lord—praying for the unconverted, for the afflicted, for the dying—soliciting that Divinelight may be imparted to the ignorant—Divine guidance be afforded the wanderer—Divine life be bestowed on the dead. What fervency and importunity are necessary, when a minister is imploring that Christ may be glorified, by the wide

extension of his kingdom—the continued multiplication of his converts—and the annihilation of his enemies!

Nothing strikes a congregation more than holy fervour in prayer, on the part of a minister, and, especially, a young minister—an elevation of the soul to heaven—an absorption of the spirit in the public observance of the exercise. A determination, the result of the noblest feeling—to wrestle with the Angel of the Covenant on behalf of his flock, and not to let him go except he bless them. It rivets—it elevates—it profoundly impresses; and often does it carry the souls of the people, for a time, to Paradise.

So it was with Doctor Simpson. His prayers were remarkable for their devotional fervour, and produced a deep impression. He seemed, by them, to create a heavenly atmosphere, the inhaling of which promoted spiritual life and energy.

So it was with the late Doctor Waugh. There was a beauty—a deep-toned solemnity—a holy fervour—a remarkable elevation, in connexion with his prayers, which not only charmed the people, but bore them to heaven—to the very throne of God. The writer can forget many things, in themselves excellent and admirable, with regard to Dr. Waugh, because developed by many other ministers; but he *never can forget his prayers*. The prayer, especially, which he presented at the Poultry Chapel, London, immediately before the funeral sermon for the venerated Dr. Bogue, by Dr. Bennet, was, unquestionably, the finest, the grandest, the most impressive, to which he ever listened. The audience was almost overpowered. We were taken to the summit of Pisgah—we were almost admitted to Paradise. It was the *very sublime* of devotion.

Valued brethren, and, especially, young brethren, labouring for God, aim at this excellence in prayer—this fervency, devotion, and elevated feeling, at the throne of grace. It will give remarkable life, beauty, and power to your ministry—will exceedingly soften and chasten your spirit—and will

render your preaching highly persuasive and efficacious. We would affectionately say, if you excel in anything, let it be in the copiousness, fervour, and holy richness of your prayers.

XIII. A minister should be marked by his *adaptation to the popular mind*:—in other words, by his adaptation to human nature—to the people universally.

It is essential to ministerial acceptance, impression, and usefulness, that this qualification be possessed. We do not wonder at the little effect produced by some ministers. There is no regard to human nature—no acquaintance with it. There is no adaptation to the popular mind. The people are never studied—and their understandings, their imaginations, their hearts are, consequently, not reached. A minister, to *gain* the people, must *study* the people. He must be most skilful and adroit in the means which he employs to fix their attention, to excite their interest, to secure their esteem, to impress their consciences. It is stated, with regard to the “Great Teacher,” that “the common people heard him gladly;” and we do not wonder at it. There was, in the teaching and general ministry of our Lord, *consummate adaptation*;—the most appropriate and striking means were employed to rivet their minds—to awaken their deepest interest—to inspire their love and admiration. There was no stiffness—no unnecessary and undesirable elaboration—no attention to mere ornament—no indifference to incidents—to passing events—to the scenery of nature—to beautiful and striking imagery, at all calculated to arrest and captivate them, to convey truth impressively to the mind, and permanently to do them good.

All ministers who wish to be useful—extensively useful—useful to all classes—must imitate the Saviour—must study his discourses—must mark his mode of instruction—carefully examine his language, his illustrations, his appeals, his conversations with the people—in order that they may secure

general attention, and, by the Divine blessing, produce general impression. There must be a *fitness* for the *masses*. The bulk of the people must be regarded. Indeed, man must be viewed *as man*, and all possible means must be employed that his understanding may be enlightened—his judgment be directed—his affections be secured—his heart be subdued.

Plainness and ease of language—a natural and unembarrassed manner—affectionateness and persuasiveness in the exhibition of Divine truth—the continual development of an earnest desire to do good—should always mark the public services of every minister—and will, unquestionably, mark those of every effective minister of Christ. What made a Whitfield? What made a Spencer? *Grace* and *nature*; not grace without nature, nor nature without grace; but what can withstand the attraction of both?

A master in the art of reaching the minds and hearts of the people—the most educated as well as the most uncultured,*—has observed, with acuteness and wisdom—“What he deems wanting is a mode of preaching more remote from scholasticism; warm and experimental; not highly doctrinal, nor drily practical, but blending the doctrines and practice of Christianity strongly with the affections; abounding with point and interest, and which shall come home, not only to every man’s business, but to *every man’s bosom*—which shall make the hearers weep rather than wonder, and talk more of the subject than the preacher.” An admirable description,—would that it were more generally and practically exemplified!

XIV. A minister should be characterised by *manly independence*. An independence of thought—of judgment—of character. An independence which is associated with intelligence—with high principle—which is the concomitant of real excellence.

A minister must be unfettered, perfectly unfettered in

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the selection of his subjects, on all occasions—and in the mode of his illustrations and appeals. Any restrictions with regard to this vital point would lower his character, and effectually mar his usefulness. A minister of Christ must rise above the fear of man. There must be no servility—no crouching—and there must be no undue apprehension of any human being. To his own Master he stands or falls. Whatever the education of one, the opulence of another, or the influence of a third party—the servant of God must be straight-forward, bold, and fearless, in the exhibition of the truth. He must ever act from principle, not from expediency. He must not pander to the taste of one—or consult the inclinations of another. He must not regard the aversion of one to the faithful statement of the Gospel, or be daunted by the opposition of another. His motto must be—"I am resolved to obey God rather than man. I must and will discharge my duty to my Lord, and to the souls around me. I must and will proclaim the Gospel, as the Saviour teaches and assists me, whatever the difficulties or trials which I may realise in consequence."

This is the spirit which we appreciate, and which God will acknowledge and bless. A timid minister—one who is soon daunted—soon afraid of man—will often be the *vacillating* minister. He will be cramped—checked—and injured in his ministrations. "Did ye ever hear," inquired the late Doctor Waugh, "of a *cowed man* doing any good, in your life?" There is a world of truth and meaning in that concise and pertinent inquiry.

Not that we admire, or would, by any means, recommend, a *stubborn* independence of mind and character, on the part of a minister, and especially a *young* minister;—an independence which regards none, whatever their weight or excellence—an independence which will never yield, under any circumstances, to kind and judicious advice—to a gentle and well-directed representation, or remonstrance, from an intelligent and truly devout friend. There are, often, faults

to be corrected—errors to be removed—little circumstances which impede general acceptance and usefulness to be obviated. A kind and respectful hint from an experienced and valued Christian, or officer of the church, in such a case, is important, and may be most necessary to a young minister, and should be appreciated. Nothing, however, which interferes with the legitimate exercise of our ministry—with the unfettered exhibition of Christian doctrine—with the unrestricted presentation of the invitations of redeeming mercy—should be suffered, for a moment, to check us, in discharging our duty to God, and to the souls of men.

Without this manly independence—this nobility of soul—from a sincere desire to approve ourselves to our great Taskmaster's eye, there can be no true ministerial dignity and freedom—no testimony of conscience, that it is our *supreme* aim to please God, and not man—to honour God, and not man.

“ Careless myself, a dying man,
Of dying men's esteem,
Happy, O Lord, if Thou approve,
Though *all besides* condemn ! ”

XV. A minister should be marked by *decision*, or *resolution*, in opposition to fickleness.

There should be exhibited by him decision in plan—in study—in purpose—in effort. This is a most necessary qualification for ministerial progress and usefulness ;—indeed, it is one of the most important and efficient in connexion with the ministerial character. There may be developed by a minister, a prompt and retentive memory—a lively imagination—an acute and sagacious judgment—powerful emotions—strong passions, and these may be, and will be, *all useful*, as qualities marking the superior and distinguished man,—still, how little they avail—how trifling their efficiency, without decision—without fixed determination of mind and purpose. As has been justly observed—“ they all need resolution to bring them *to a point*; as in the

case of a burning glass, the ray would not burn without the glass, nor the glass transmit heat, unless it had the property of collecting the rays into a focus, so it is resolution which *combines* and *powerfully applies* the other talents."

Many young ministers impair their reputation, and not merely damage, but lose, their respectability, by the want of decision. They are fickle and fluctuating. There is no fixedness of plan—no steadiness of effort. They fritter away their time, and really good abilities, in doing comparatively nothing. Their fault—their besetting sin—is, a want of firmness and perseverance—a determination to do something for God—for the church—for the neighbourhood where they reside. There is no resolution to do their best—to go on with steady and increasing vigour.

It was remarked by Sir Isaac Newton, that he did not consider himself to possess any advantage over other men, except that whatever he observed of sufficient importance to *begin*, he had sufficient resolution to *continue*, till he had accomplished his object. This must be the characteristic broadly unfolded by every minister of the Gospel. This must be a prominent feature displayed by every *young* minister. The blossoms must set. The fruit, in its season, must be yielded. A decided, uniform, unfaltering course must be pursued, with regard to the studies which are to be maintained—the energies which are to be put forth—the arrangements for doing good which are to be made—and the exertions to be pursued, in order that the church may be benefited, and that sinners may be brought effectually to the Saviour. We have known some, whose ministry has dwindled away to nothing:—there has, eventually, been no acceptance, no life, no power, from the want of decision, and steady resoluteness of purpose and endeavour. Let it, then, be with every young minister a study to acquire this habit, and, under the influence of enlightened views, and holy feelings, to maintain it continually.

XVI. A minister should be characterised by *unfeigned humility*.

Whatever the amount of learning which he has acquired—whatever the superiority, or even splendour, of his talents—whatever the eminence of his position in the church—the deference which is paid to him, or the sentiments of veneration with which he may be regarded, he should uniformly be marked by humbleness of mind; he should entertain a lowly opinion of himself—of his character—his attainments—his labours—his usefulness—before God.

There is, unquestionably, nothing which is more beautiful, in connexion with the ministerial character, than humility. It chastens all—it singularly adorns and dignifies all. It imparts, to a *young* minister, especially, an exquisite and fascinating charm. When, in preaching the Gospel—leading the devotions of the people—administering the Lord's Supper to the church—taking the young and anxious inquirer by the hand—noticing the poor of Christ's flock—visiting the sick and dying, and abounding in labours of love—a minister is arrayed, at all times, in the robe of humility—how beautiful, in the estimation of the wise and good, does he appear—how lovely is he, even in the eyes of the angels of God!

And is there anything which is more essential to a Christian minister than the humility of the Lord Jesus? What is a minister worth without its exemplification—its unaffected and invariable developement? Granted, that acquirements are profound—that mind is powerful and original—that oratory is striking and commanding—that there is much to dazzle, to impress, even to surprise—still, if there be an evident want of humility—if there be a broad exhibition of arrogance and self-conceit—where is the real beauty—where is the real power—where is the greatly to be desired effect of the ministry? The want of humility mars all—paralyses all.

It is most worthy of contemplation and remembrance, that the most eminent ministers—those who have been the most distinguished for their learning, endowments, piety, labours, successes—have uniformly been the *most humble*. They have entertained the most modest opinion of themselves—and of what they have done. Indeed, they have felt before God that they have done comparatively *nothing*—that they have *been nothing*.

The humility of Baxter and Howe was most beautifully unfolded. The humility of the sainted Henries always strikes us as having been one of the finest features of their character, and which lent a peculiar charm to their ministry and writings. The humility of Robert Hall was one of the loveliest features in connexion with his mind and history. It is recorded of the late superior and honoured Greville Ewing, of Glasgow—at the very time when the public estimation of him was at its height—that, “instead of being puffed up, by the running tide of well-earned popularity, I never saw, in any other preacher, *so much* of the *abiding expression of true humility*, in connexion with the work of the ministry.”* It is mentioned respecting the late eminent Doctor Milner, Dean of Carlisle, and President of Queen’s College, Cambridge, that “a genuine and unaffected humility was a striking feature in his character.” Though his attainments and talents were so commanding, he was ready to learn from any one who was able to afford him instruction; he invariably treated, with unfeigned respect, the *most illiterate* person, if such person appeared to him to be truly, in spiritual knowledge, “taught of God.” So far from setting an undue value on the splendid advantages arising from his talents and fine acquisitions, “he considered them but as dust in the balance, when weighed against those religious attainments which are the fruits and evidences of a living Christian

* Vide the “Life of Greville Ewing,” by his daughter, Mrs. Matheson, page 233. A biographical portraiture of great discrimination and excellence, and one which does honour to a female pen.

faith." * But no example of humility, except in the instance of our Lord himself, can equal that which was developed by the great apostle, Paul—an example which should be continually before the mind of every minister of the Word. Whatever the extent of his labours—the power of his ministry—the splendour of his miracles—the number of churches which he formed—the accumulated and extraordinary trials which he endured—he regarded himself as being “less than the least of all saints,” and, when recurring to his successes, he exclaimed—“I have planted—Apollos watered; but God gave the increase. So, then, neither is he that planteth anything, neither he that watereth; but God that giveth the increase.”—(1 Cor. iii. 6, 7.) Nothing, in connexion with Paul, more rivets, more charms us, than his humility. It was the peerless gem in his crown, and so it should be in the crown worn by every minister of Jesus Christ.

XVII. A minister should uniformly be distinguished by *ardent love to the Saviour*.

He must *enter* the ministry *solely* from love to Christ. Nothing else must prompt him to commence its labours—to discharge its high duties—to realise its privileges—and to look forward to its ultimate reward.

He must *continue* in the ministry from love to the Saviour. This must be *the one* principle which governs his mind—*the one* emotion which fires his soul—*the one passion* which impels him continually in the prosecution of all his engagements.

The love of Christ must regulate all his studies—dictate all his prayers—inspire all his discourses—control all his arrangements—and be the ruling motive and spring, as well as end, of all his labours.

Ardent, elevated, growing love to the Saviour is the

* Vide the “Biography of Isaac Milner, D.D., F.R.S.,” by his niece. A charming volume—one of great value to every minister.

glory of a minister of the Gospel—that spirit—that grace—that qualification—without which, everything else is comparatively nothing. A minister may be profound as a linguist—superior as a logician—eminent for his skill as a metaphysician—commanding as a pulpit orator, but if love to Christ, “the Lord from heaven”—and the Head of the Church—does not *reign* in his heart, chastening all his feelings, purifying all his affections, elevating all his desires—and, indeed, pervading his entire character—where is the excellence of his ministry?—where is the illustration of the spirit befitting the sacred office?—where are the real, the evangelical fruits of his labours?

There is nothing, consequently, which the ministers of the Word should be more anxious, at all times, to unfold, than *supreme love* to the Redeemer. It should be their most prominent feature—their brightest characteristic. It should ever glow within them, as a pure and celestial flame—irradiating the mind, and warming the heart. There is no development of character and conduct which they should feel more desirous of furnishing, than that which marked and beautified the seraphic Samuel Pearce, of Birmingham—*holy love*—the purest and warmest love to Christ Jesus which any human being could display.

Love to Christ will uniformly give to ministers a *devotional spirit*. It will surround them with a devotional atmosphere. It will enkindle devotional feelings—awaken, and keep alive, devotional affections—prompt devotional prayers—and cherish, at all periods, devotional desires.

Love to Christ will prompt them to *vigorous* and *untiring labour*. If supreme love to the Saviour glow and operate within them, they cannot be idle—cold—drowsy. They must work for Christ. All their energies must be aroused, that the Redeemer’s kingdom may be widened—that the Redeemer’s glory may be subserved.

Love to Christ will *sanctify* their preaching, and render it *efficacious*. It will not only impart to it its highest beauty,

but it will communicate to it "an unction" from above, which will associate with it all that is elevated, holy, and impressive. "The Word will come with power," because it is inspired by love, and spoken in love.

Love to Christ will lend a peculiar fascination to their *public* prayers. It will dictate them—it will chasten them—it will enrich and elevate them—and it will render them most penetrating and powerful.

Love to Christ will *sustain* them amidst all their *discouragements*. It will be a perpetual solace to the mind—an unfailing stay to the soul. When cast down, it will revive them—when opposed and impeded, it will succour and stimulate them—when persecuted, it will powerfully support them—and they will feel that, though they are "persecuted, they are not forsaken—that, though they are cast down, they are not destroyed."—(2 Cor. iv. 9.)

Love to Christ will maintain *perseverance*. When supreme attachment to the Lord Jesus governs the heart of a minister, he will be *devoted* to his Divine Master. There will be no shrinking—no deviation—no faltering in his course—no wish to draw back, whatever his difficulties and trials. He will maintain his ground. He will go forward with undaunted firmness. He will consider that *his life* is the Lord's, as well as *his death*, and therefore he will be most anxious to persevere, till his departing moments, in the great work to which the Saviour has called him.

Nothing, we are persuaded, but ardent love to Christ, and genuine compassion for souls, will reconcile the mind to the privations, the insult, and opposition, to be experienced by all who are faithful in the labours of the ministry. "These words," Doctor Waugh observes, "seem to be inscribed on the doors of our divinity schools—'If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and *take up his cross*, and follow me.'"—(Matt. xvi. 24.)

Supreme love to Christ, then, is the *pre-eminent* qualification for the ministry.

XVIII. A Christian minister should be marked by *habitual communion with God*.

There must be an earnest and elevated desire cherished, at all times, to realise "fellowship with the Father, and with his Son Jesus Christ."—(1 John i. 3.) *That* fellowship which springs from holy love—which is, at once, intimate, sublime, and endearing; that fellowship which will be associated with the enjoyment of every precious blessing—which will so materially operate on his character, as to affect and influence his ministry—which will be, to the holy and devoted pastor, amidst all his labours, difficulties, and sorrows, the very antepast of heaven.

Nothing should be so much desired, by a minister of the sanctuary, as the presence of God;—and that presence cannot be realised, unless there be an ardent and supreme solicitude to hold communion with him. A minister should feel as David did, when he exclaimed, "As the hart panteth after the water-brooks, so panteth my soul after thee, O God."—(Psalm xlii. 1.)

If there be habitual communion with God desired and longed after, what an elevation will be given to the *character* of a minister! what purity to his motives! what sanctity to his affections! what a chastening and hallowed influence to his prayers, his conversation, and *all* his labours! How it will regulate his *studies*—ever purifying them, and rendering them subservient to the noblest purposes! Besides, it will connect with them the utmost tranquillity and delight. What a character and tone, also, will it give to his *preaching*! It will not be tame, cold, inoperative. It will be full of beauty—full of life—full of power.

Who is the *well-qualified* minister? The one who cultivates and realises habitual communion with heaven. The one who walks with God, as did Enoch and Noah. The one who soars to Paradise, as did the Psalmist. The one who has his "conversation in heaven," as had Paul.

Who is the *efficient* minister and pastor? The one, un-

doubtedly, who lives near to God—who has God, by his Spirit, dwelling in his heart—who is continually seeking after the enjoyment of the Divine presence and favour—who delights in retirement, that he may be alone with his Father in heaven, with his Lord and Saviour.

How just and beautiful is the following description!—
 “It is *alone with God* that the minister of the Gospel best qualifies himself for his work. It is there that he is wrought into the due temper of his office. It is there that he rises above the fear of man, and resolves not to ‘shun to declare all the counsel of God.’ He is the last man in the world who should be to be had. He should resist, with the firmness of a martyr, all encroachments on his holy solitude. His hearers will soon learn, by the want of savour in his ministrations, that he loves to be more abroad than at home, and is fonder of the parlour than the closet. Whereas the man, that issues from frequent and long retirement, will ascend the pulpit as Aaron entered the tabernacle of the congregation, when the holy oil had been poured on his head, and the fragrance filled the place.”* While dwelling on these thoughts, how powerfully are we reminded of the fine lines of Cowper,—

“When one that holds communion with the skies
 Has filled his urn where these pure waters rise,
 And once more mingles with us meaner things,
 ’Tis e’en as if an angel shook his wings :
 Immortal fragrance fills the circuit wide,
 That tells us *whence* his treasures are supplied.”

XIX. It is most important, that a Christian minister should discover a *concentration of the energies on one great object*.

It is palpable to all who are acquainted with the Gospel, that the object of the minister of the Word should be, and invariably is, provided he be a faithful servant of the

* Jay.

Redeemer—but *one*, namely, to *glorify Christ*. His plans are manifold—the means he employs, to secure the end which he has in view, are widely diversified—his labours, as he is seeking to “win souls,” are continually varying,—still, his object is *single*, to subserve the honour of the Lord Jesus; and that object should be, by every minister, kept steadily and supremely before the mind’s eye. Nothing should be allowed to interfere with it, or to divert him, for a moment, from its ultimate accomplishment.

He has, if “a holy man of God,” assumed the ministerial character, to labour simply for Christ—to proclaim the Gospel of Christ—to unfold the beauty and preciousness of Christ—to exalt the grace of Christ—to multiply the friends of Christ—to extend the boundaries of the kingdom of Christ—and every arrangement and every effort should be made to bear, wisely and directly, on this object.

He is to breathe the spirit of the apostle Paul, when he expressed the fine sentiment—“*This one thing I do;*”—(Philippians iii. 13;)—or the admirable maxim—“For me to live is Christ;”—that is, the glory of Christ is the business, the object, of my life.—(Philippians i. 21.) This spirit—this great principle—made Paul the man, the minister, the apostle that he was. The honour of his Lord—his risen, his compassionate, his adored Redeemer—was *the one* grand object on which he fixed his mind, and from which, after his conversion, he was never diverted. In all his arrangements—all his conversations—all his labours—all his discourses—all his epistles to the churches—all his prayers—all his privations—all his persecutions—we perceive that this object absorbed his soul. His ruling desire was, that “Christ might be magnified in his body, whether by life or by death.”—(Philippians i. 20.) He was ready to do all—to endure all—simply that the Saviour might be glorified.

And so must it be with every minister of the Lord Jesus who is anxious to make full proof of his ministry—who is desirous of fulfilling the work which the Saviour has given

him to do. His aim—his purpose—must be one, however various the means which he employs to secure it. “I only live for Christ;” this must be his motto—his controlling, uniform, absorbing desire. All his learning—all his natural or acquired advantages—all his energies of body—all his powers of mind—all the affections of his heart—must be concentrated to accomplish this glorious end; then, he will furnish a decisive and beautiful evidence that he has entered into the full spirit of his office—and when he dies, it will be seen, by the broad and delightful results of his instrumentality, that he has not lived and laboured in vain.

XX. A minister of the Gospel should cherish a *continual sense of dependance on the Lord Jesus*.

There must be entire reliance on the Saviour’s grace to aid in the discharge of ministerial duties—for, how can those duties, so diversified—so onerous—so spiritual—so responsible—be appropriately, and with any adequacy, performed, unless the strength of Christ be imparted from on high. The Christian minister must, therefore, seek this grace perpetually, that he may be prepared for his arduous labours, and execute his engagements in such a manner as that a special blessing may follow.

There must be simple reliance on the Saviour’s presence, to animate and encourage him in the performance of the high duties of his office. He will find nothing so sustaining and consolatory as the enjoyment of his Master’s presence. The assurance that his divine Lord is with him, to enlighten him, to succour him, and to bless him, will uniformly render him happy. When he enters the study—when he repairs to the sanctuary—when he ascends his pulpit—when he is discharging his more private, but not less valuable pastoral duties, if he be convinced—if he feel—that the Lord is with him, how is his spirit cheered, and how is he impelled in the prosecution of his anxious undertaking!

There must be reliance on the Spirit of the Redeemer to

apply "the Word with power," for there will be no saving application of the truth without it; no permanent results flowing from the ministry, without the omnipotent agency of the Holy Spirit be exerted. The Christian minister must, therefore, rely simply on the Spirit of God, to illuminate the benighted understanding—to subdue the stubborn will—to raise and ennoble the grovelling affections and desires—to purify unholy tempers—to induce thorough hatred of sin, and delight in the character and work of the Redeemer—in a word, to renovate the *entire man*.

Where a minister feels aright, this sense of dependance on the Lord Jesus will be *profound*. It will spring from the most enlightened and penetrating views of *himself*—of his infirmities and of his utter inadequacy for discharging, without divine teaching and succour, the duties of the pastoral relation—of the *nature* of *his undertaking*, its spirituality, holiness, magnitude, responsibility—of the *temper* and *conduct* of men with regard to the Gospel, so ignorant of its meaning and beauty, so regardless of its excellence and importance, so averse to its claims and obligations:—these views of himself, of his work, and of the indifference and aversion of men to Christ and his Gospel, will induce a profound sense of reliance on the power of the Saviour, and the agency of the Spirit of God.

This sense of dependance, in the ministry, will be *growingly* felt. It will ever be increasing in vigour and intensity. A Christian pastor, entering into the true spirit of his office, will be continually cherishing a deeper, and yet deeper solicitude, that he may lean simply on Christ Jesus for all those supplies of wisdom, holiness, and grace, by which the Saviour's glory will be promoted, and in connexion with which the Gospel will come with power. The enlightened and faithful minister will cultivate an ardent desire to realise this sense of dependance on the Spirit of his Lord *at all times*. It will be his anxiety *never* to enter his study without feeling it—never to read the Scriptures—never to engage in prayer—

never to sit down to the composition of a discourse—never to attempt the delivery of a sermon—never to visit the sick and dying—never to invite a sinner to repair to Christ—never even to offer a remark to the unconverted, without recurring to it. Unless this be the reigning spirit cherished by all those who have entered, or who are about entering, on the spiritual and holy engagements of the ministry, we at once inquire where is, or where can be, the blessing? Will any living energy accompany the presentation of the truth? Will there be any permanent impression—any saving efficacy—resulting from the labours of the ministry? It is impossible! Unless a minister rely, spontaneously and entirely, on the agency of the Spirit of God, to render his ministrations full of life and power, his right arm is withered—all his plans and efforts to do good are comparatively valueless;—in the highest sense, they are utterly inefficient. The Holy Spirit will be, must be, *honoured*, else there can be no blessing—no vitality connected with religious exercises—no extension of the church, as the fruit of ministerial labour.

Ministers of the Gospel! how important it is that you should feel this more than ever—that it should influence your studies, your efforts, your souls, continually—that it should absorb your minds—that it should pervade your whole being! When you realise the necessity of Divine agency, in some degree, as it ought to be realised, you will have a blessing *at once*. You will never labour without *some* good resulting from your instrumentality. Many will be instructed, and “made light in the Lord;” many will be edified and established in the faith and hope of the Gospel; many will be savingly impressed, and effectually directed to the Redeemer; and you will have occasion for peculiar joy and thanksgiving, that “the hand of the Lord” is with you, and that many are believing and turning to the Lord. Thus the end of your efforts will be secured—your highest desires will be realised—your noblest expectations will be fulfilled.

Candidates for the holy ministry! let the Spirit of God ever be honoured by you! Never think you can take one step aright, unless he lead you—that you can pursue any studies bearing directly on the sacred office, wisely and efficiently, unless he influence your minds, impart clearness and fulness to your perceptions—acuteness and vigour to your faculties—and render all useful in relation to prospective plans and labours. And, when you shall enter immediately on your high calling, and discharge the duties of the pastorate, never, for one moment, entertain the opinion, as foolish as dangerous, that you can do anything *to purpose*, without the Spirit of God! You will never enlighten *one* dark mind—never lead *one* young inquirer to Christ—never soften *one* hard heart—never edify or confirm *one* believer—never encourage and stimulate *one* in the way to heaven—unless you have the presence of the Holy Spirit with you, and feel the absolute necessity of realising that presence from day to day. Let, then, this thought always be standing out in bold relief before your minds—“we must have the Spirit of God with us”—to illuminate our own minds, and to render our services in the ministry at all efficacious; and you will invariably find, that, just as you rely on the Spirit of Christ, and desire to honour *that* Spirit, you will have a blessing, and be honoured in return. When you enter regularly on your honourable work, you will commence it, not in your own strength, but in that of the Spirit of God; and, hence, there will be vitality in your preaching—an unction and impressiveness in your prayers—and a divine and gracious power associated with your efforts to benefit and bless your fellow-men. One and another will be brought to Christ. The friends of the Saviour will be multiplied. “Seals” will be continually added to your ministry—and, as years revolve, numbers will be gratefully and joyfully pointing to you, as the honoured instruments of directing them to the Lord Jesus, and of bringing them into the fold of “the good Shepherd;” and all this will result from your

studiously and continually endeavouring to honour the Spirit of God.

A minister of the Gospel, then, should uniformly remember, that one of the *highest qualifications* which he can possess is, to lean on the Lord Jesus, and on the grace of his Holy Spirit, with undivided and filial confidence. This must be his study—his ambition—his glory. It is requisite that he prepare his discourses with the utmost accuracy and care, and deliver them with the utmost persuasiveness and fervour; as though success almost depended on his own efforts—for God will never bless sluggishness or inertness; and, at the same time, he must rely absolutely on the power of the Saviour's arm, and the sufficiency of the Saviour's grace, to seal the message which he delivers, to unfold the beauty of the truth which he presents to the people, and to stamp its Divine impress on the soul. It is when the Lord Jesus and the Holy Spirit are thus simply relied on, that all those sublime and glorious effects are produced on the judgments, the understandings, and the consciences of sinners, which are so pre-eminently desirable, and so graciously promised. It is this union of vigorous, untiring labour, with simplicity of dependance on the influence of the Holy Spirit, and on the all-sufficient grace of the Son of God, which imparts to the ministerial character its highest beauty—which is ever associated with a rich, and, sometimes, a most commanding blessing—and after which every devoted and honoured servant of Jesus Christ so ardently breathes. He feels that he can do nothing whatever in the ministry *efficiently*, unless God be with him, to teach, to guide, to succour, and to bless—to convey truth to the understanding—to lodge it in the memory—to impress it savingly on the heart. But, if the presence of the Spirit be realised, and the power of the Spirit be felt, “worm Jacob can even thresh the mountains, and beat them small, and make the hills as chaff.”—(Isa. xli. 15.)

XXI. We would sum up all which has been advanced in this chapter by remarking, that the minister of Christ must cherish an unceasing desire to be *useful*.

He must live not to himself, but to the Lord. He must labour, strive, agonise, to do good to others—to be the instrument of conferring on them the highest benefits, even the priceless blessings of salvation. This must be his single, his absorbing desire. Everything must be subordinated to usefulness—all the acquisitions he has made, however superior; all the abilities he possesses, however commanding; all the prayers he may prefer—all the discourses he may deliver—all the visits he pays—all the influence he exerts—all the conversations in which he may engage with his own people, or strangers—in a word, all his arrangements and operations must evince *one* thing, that the paramount desire with him is, to be useful to immortal souls—to do good, in the *noblest* sense of the expression, while eternity is in view—while “the Judge is standing at the door.” So it was with Whitfield. This was his passion—his supreme desire—the only object for which he lived and laboured. We see it by the beautiful simplicity of his preaching—by the purely evangelical character of his discourses—by the persuasiveness and power of his appeals—by the tenderness and fervour of his invitations—by the boldness and fidelity of his remonstrances and reproofs—by his impassioned addresses to sinners—by the exquisite joy which he realised when any were brought to repentance. He could fully express the sentiment of Paul, as noble as rare,—“My little children, of whom I travail in birth again, until Christ be formed in you.”—(Galatians iv. 19.) This must be the high qualification of every devoted minister—indeed, this will be his prevailing desire, and, while cultivating this desire, he will be intensely anxious to *ascertain* that he is useful—that he is not living and labouring in vain. By the instruction furnished—by the direction and edification imparted—by the young who receive benefit—by the

sinner who are humbled, regenerated, redeemed—by the church under his care extended, and its peace and happiness maintained—it will be palpable that God is crowning his solitudes after usefulness with an ample blessing. Thus will he be gratified. Thus will he be honoured. Thus will he reap a glorious reward. The fine spirit of the Rev. Greville Ewing should be that of every minister of Christ. His daughter, in her valuable biography of her father, observes:—"I have heard my father say, that often he would gladly have *interrupted* the singing of the *last* hymn, to make some additional remark, or appeal; and that, on the Sabbath night, he could very seldom rest, from an anxious and scrutinising review of the day's discourses,—a fear that he might, on the one hand, have said anything to darken counsel, or omitted, on the other, any important truth." *

And what was the result flowing from the cultivation of such a spirit? What we should naturally have expected—his faithful and devoted labours were eminently blest. His ministry was signally honoured by the Lord Jesus, and many now live who will be his crown of rejoicing for ever. A passion for usefulness, on the part of a minister, God will always regard, and often singularly bless; and, when this is developed at the commencement of the ministerial career, how frequently is it pre-eminently crowned, in the conversion of some sinners to the faith of Jesus Christ. This was the experience of John Griffin, jun., when ardently desiring to enter on regular studies for the pastorate. He had been delivering a missionary address, at Mr. Harrison's chapel, at Woburn, which was rendered savingly useful to a young person who had listened to it. He remarks, in his diary, "I have just had the inexpressible pleasure of hearing that God has been pleased to bless my feeble labours to an immortal soul. None but those who know the feelings this excites, can enter into mine. It has filled my soul with unmingled delight—made me pant more ardently than ever

* Life of Ewing, p. 235.

after the ministry, and brought me, I trust, again to the throne of grace, with unfeigned gratitude, and with resolutions to be entirely devoted to my Redeemer's honour. Lord! what am I, that thou art mindful of me, in honouring me, as an instrument, in the conversion of an immortal soul! Oh! let this be the *first fruit* of many who shall own the power of thy grace, through my instrumentality! It will afford me a grateful theme of remembrance through all the scenes of this changing life, and, I hope, through the ages of eternity." * Thus God honoured the ardent desire of this young minister to be useful.

So it was with the late Rev. John Cooke, of Maidenhead, at the outset of his career. When his gifts and graces, at an early period of his history, were developed, he observes:—"I was called upon at the prayer meetings, and always was short, until the duty became a delightful privilege to me, and very acceptable to my brethren. I was sent for to the distressed in mind, and afflicted in body, and went on from strength to strength; other members, perceiving the progress and acceptableness of my gifts, called on me to expound a few verses of the Scriptures. I yielded to their requests, in my best manner, until report brought my minister to hear me at the shutter. One evening he came in, and I was confused. 'Never mind,' said he, 'if I have destroyed your self-complacency.' I was then called to preach in small congregations, and, very soon, in his pulpit. The broad seal of heaven was annexed to my youthful testimony, in the *conversion of six persons, who joined the church*. This so endeared me to the church, that they followed me to every place. My peace flowed like a river, and my blessedness like the waves of the sea. God was my life, and made me the life of the church. I discharged the duty of the deacons, in visiting the sick, speaking in the villages, leading the singers, and enlivening the prayer meetings. My duties were my element. I lived in the region of life

* Life of Rev. John Griffin, jun., pp. 190, 191.

and peace.”* Thus God blesses and rewards those who have the essential and, indeed, primary qualification for the Christian ministry—a glowing and impassioned desire to be useful; and without which qualification there is no fitness for the work possessed, whatever the reputation for learning and talent gained, or the amiable and high moral developments furnished.

We have now, in this section, dilated on the leading qualifications, both of mind and character, which are requisite for the ministers of the Gospel—and which will distinguish, in a greater or less degree, every good and efficient “servant of Jesus Christ.” We perceive that these qualifications are very numerous and varied—that they are exceedingly valuable—and that it is of the utmost importance they should be displayed by “the heralds of salvation” in rich and beautiful combination. It must, however, be remembered, at all times, that these high qualifications for the ministry are not the result of *human* communication, or *human* effort. The unction must come from above. The light must stream from Heaven. The power of utterance, of mind, of persuasion, must be imparted by God himself. All the graces which should be transparently and harmoniously unfolded, in connexion with the ministerial character, proceed immediately from the Holy Spirit. These thoughts cannot be too seriously pondered, in order that the mind may be suitably impressed—the judgment be wisely directed—and the heart powerfully feel, that the “good and perfect gifts” and graces, requisite for the full and honourable discharge of pastoral engagements, must descend from the throne of God.

Candidates for the Christian ministry, weigh, most carefully, the preceding representations. If they are in unison with Scripture, they are transcendently important. If they harmonise with the experience of the devoted and honoured servants of Christ, from age to age, they cannot be safely disre-

* Redford's *Life of Cooke*, p. 35.

garded. They are essential to respectability and esteem—to peace and happiness—to progress and efficiency—to the extension of the church—the glory of *the one* Saviour—the salvation of souls. Candidates for the holy ministry! have you the qualifications to which we have been recurring? In the opinion of the church, at the present period, it is obvious that the standard of ministerial qualification must be loftier and more decisive than ever. Examine yourselves carefully,—most impartially. Do not act on your own responsibility. Take no step without *much prayer*. Let others, well qualified to form a comprehensive and most accurate judgment, encourage you, and bring you forward, lest, by moving unadvisedly, and devoid of the necessary qualifications, you incur much self-reproach—involve yourselves in difficulty, and entail on yourselves unhappiness during the whole of life. We, therefore, most earnestly beseech you to read well your character—to ascertain the characteristic qualities of your minds—and to be fully satisfied that it is your ardent and inextinguishable desire to exemplify those obvious and noble properties which mark and beautify “the good minister of Jesus Christ.” Better, infinitely better, occupy any situation than that of the Christian ministry, without the intellectual, moral, and holy qualifications indispensable to the execution of its engagements. What can be more undesirable—more degrading—more miserable—than to bear the name, and fill the office, of the ministry, destitute of the gifts and graces essential to its being appropriately and efficiently exercised! What anxieties must be felt! what burdens sustained! what irksome duties performed! what miserable subterfuges must often be resorted to! what a load, not only pressing, but insupportable, must frequently bear down the spirit! How much more desirable to occupy any post, however menial, laborious, and obscure, than to enter the Christian ministry, unless *God himself* put you into the office, and effectually qualify you for it! Ministerial candidates! reflect, long and

profoundly, on these considerations, and let them induce the most searching self-examination, and the most fervid prayer, that all may be right in *your* progress;—that the will of God may be seen—the honour of Christ be promoted—your own peace and happiness result—and your usefulness and honour in the church be permanently secured.

CHAPTER IV.

THE SPIRIT UNDER THE INFLUENCE OF WHICH THE MINISTRY SHOULD BE ANTICIPATED.

THE temper, under the influence of which we commence any great enterprise, is of the utmost moment, and it cannot be too carefully and seriously regarded. It should be one in unison with its nature and object—one calculated to facilitate the designs which we are anxious to accomplish. Were the spirit in which great undertakings are often commenced, more calmly and profoundly contemplated, and were more vigorous and well-directed effort put forth to develop the *precise* disposition which should be unfolded, there would be much more decisive and extended success resulting from plans which are formed, and labours which are undertaken, than is often exhibited.

Applying this observation to the Christian ministry, we would observe, most emphatically, that the *spirit* in which the sacred office is entered on, cannot be too earnestly contemplated—cannot be too soberly or deliberately weighed.

In the *sight* of *God* the *state* of the *mind* is everything—the disposition which prompts and controls is “all in all.” He says to every candidate for the greatest and most responsible of all employments—“Take heed to *thy spirit*”—thy prevailing temper—thy predominant emotions—thy governing desires! Man “looks on the countenance”—marks “the outward appearance;” he can proceed no further—penetrate no deeper. God, however, observes and scrutinises the heart. He demands the heart of every professor, of every avowed disciple—the heart, pre-eminently,

of *every candidate* for the *ministerial office*. The heart must be renewed by his grace—be under the direction and control of his Spirit—and be cherishing a tone and temper befitting the ministry of the Gospel continually.

The spirit, also, with which the holy ministry is entered upon, is of the gravest importance to the *candidate* himself:—that he may not act unadvisedly; that he may not touch “the ark” with unhallowed hands; that he may not be positively unfitted for the sacred and awful duties of the pastoral office; that he may not cherish those feelings, dispositions, and desires, most repugnant to the ministry, and calculated to involve him in extreme difficulty and peril.

Besides, how necessary is it to be under the influence of the right spirit in commencing the engagements of the ministry, with regard to eventual *acceptance* and *usefulness*. Without appropriate and enlightened views of the office, evangelical sentiments and feelings, and the cultivation of a truly elevated and Christian temper—in a word, without the development, the *habitual* development, of the spirit of the Lord Jesus Christ, how can the estimation of the people of God be enjoyed?—how can ministrations be received with tokens of approval?—how can a blessing from above result from their exercise? We say, then, again, and with the utmost emphasis, to all candidates for the Christian ministry—“*Take heed to your spirit!*”

1. In anticipating the ministry, let your spirit be one of *transparent simplicity*.

Let there be no disguise,—no concealment—pre-eminently, no equivocation—no approach to anything like hypocrisy. Let every sentiment—emotion—desire—be plainly and clearly unfolded. Let character be read with the greatest facility. Let your views be so luminous and defined, as that there may be no mistake entertained respecting them. Let your disposition with regard to the ministry be so naturally

and fully expressed, as that all may behold, appreciate, and admire it. And let this transparency of character in relation to the ministry be marked by its *simplicity*—its freedom from artifice—its repugnance to everything strained and unnatural, and, especially, everything *deceptive*. There must be a *oneness* marking your spirit with the ministry in view—it must be single and undivided in its character. There must be *one* temper—*one* object—*one* aim. Let it, then, be seen by all, that “a sweet spirit” of Christian simplicity rules you, in entering on the work of the ministry—that you have a disposition of pure benevolence—of exquisite tenderness—of undisguised Christianity—influencing and controlling you, to enter on studies preparatory to the discharge of ministerial labour, and that it is the *only* temper which you are desirous of cultivating.

Such transparent simplicity as this, is in perfect harmony with the Word of God—embodied in all its doctrines—exemplified, at all times, by its spirit—and not only sustained, but demanded, by all its requirements. And it is always beautiful, most beautiful, in any who are looking forward to the ministry. It imparts peculiar loveliness to the character and efforts of a young minister. Every intelligent Christian appreciates it; every experienced and honoured pastor is deeply interested, when he beholds its development by any who are designed for the service of the sanctuary; and all who really love the Saviour feel assured, that, without the cultivation of such a spirit, no young man will prosper in the great work to which he may be aspiring, and aspiring most eagerly.

Inquire, then, candidates for the ministry, and with the utmost possible earnestness, whether this transparent simplicity is unfolded by you, in prospect of your great work; in other words, whether, in relation to the business and objects before you, you are “*living epistles*, known and read of all men?”—(2 Cor. iii. 2.)

2. Candidates for the sacred office! you should enter on the ministry with *unaffected modesty*.

There must be no pretension, assumption, or vainglory. Such a spirit would be most unseemly—perfectly out of character—most unlovely and undesirable. It would, also, show very clearly that the Head of the Church had never designed those for the sacred work of the ministry who cherish such a disposition. It is an obvious remark that, where there is superior talent, there is, generally, an absence of pretension. There is much unaffected humility. There is no inflation of mind. No airs are assumed. No self-complacency is cherished. And when candidates for the Christian ministry discover arrogance and assumption, it is, we think, generally an evidence that they do not possess the superior ability, so desirable in those dedicating themselves to the greatest and best of all employments. Where there is intellectual excellence, there is, commonly, the absence of intellectual pretension.

Besides, in any instance where there is eminent piety, there is *always* much retiredness and humility. A candidate for the ministry, breathing the temper of the Lord Jesus, will entertain the most unassuming opinion of himself—of any goodness by which he may be marked—any mental power which he may possess—any acquisitions which he may have gained—any peculiar fitness for the work by which he may be distinguished.

And is not this the spirit which is *most befitting* a young man, who is cherishing the thought of entering on the holy ministry—or who is already engaged in preparatory studies for the pastoral office? Is there any temper more appropriate—more characteristic of the eminent servants of Christ—or uniformly more beautiful? The humble spirit God *always honours*. It is associated with his smile—his complacency—his blessing. Indeed, God not only communes with the humble, but dwells with them; and, especially, with the humble minister of Jesus Christ.

A humble spirit is the sign and expression of excellence—mental, moral, and divine. Real beauty of mind and character is always identified with humility. “With the lowly is wisdom.”

A humble spirit in the ministry is of the utmost moment—to keep the mind in an appropriate and devout frame—and to preserve from everything that is erroneous, improper, and injurious.

A humble spirit in the ministry is accompanied with the benediction of heaven, on the plans which are concerted—on the labours which are performed—on the efforts which are made to be useful.

A proud, self-conceited minister, one full of self-importance, and self-complacency, is not the instrument employed by God to convert sinners, to edify, console, incite, and establish the church. The minister who feels his littleness, and is deeply sensible of his unworthiness—who is impressed with a profound sense of his inadequacy for the discharge of his sacred trust, and under the influence of this spirit casts himself on the resources of Infinite Power and Wisdom, for all needful supplies of Divine knowledge, strength, and grace—will be employed by the Saviour to extend his kingdom, and to multiply the number of his friends and adherents.

Never, then, valued brethren, think of the holy ministry, without cherishing the *lowliest* dispositions and desires. In looking forward to it, provided you anticipate it aright, you will see so much greatness in the work—so much that is arduous in its duties—so much that is responsible in all its plans and labours; and, in connexion with yourselves, you will perceive so much that is ignorant, shallow, and utterly defective—so many errors to be corrected—so many deficiencies to be supplied—so much light to be imparted—so much wisdom to be given—so much strength to be afforded—so much holiness to be bestowed—that you will necessarily feel your extreme littleness; self-sufficiency

will be checked and eradicated—indeed, *all* boasting will be excluded. Let this modest, unassuming, lowly temper, therefore, always be maintained; exemplified uniformly before men, as well as before God. It will constitute one of your highest beauties. It will be associated with the richest blessings. It will be, at once, your dignity, and your crown. A young man who enters the ministry without modesty and humility, plainly shows that there is something about him which is radically, essentially, defective.

3. Candidates for the sacred office, in looking forward to its duties, you should cherish an earnest desire not to enter on the undertaking without *the Divine approbation*.

This approval of Heaven must direct you in all your movements—sustain you amidst all your anxieties—and encourage and incite you continually.

There is nothing respecting which a candidate for the ministry should be *more anxious* than to have the Divine warrant and sanction, showing him the path on which he is to enter, and steadily to pursue. He is to be intensely solicitous with regard to the will of God. It must be ascertained, clearly and fully by him. He must be most desirous of realising the Divine approbation, expressed to him in such a manner as that he may be *satisfied* he is pleasing and honouring God. He should repair to the throne of grace to prefer the request—"If Thy presence go not with me, carry me not up hence!"—(Exodus xxxiii. 15.) "If I have not Thy warrant—Thine express sanction—Thy decided approval—let me not move a step, lest Thou be dishonoured, I myself suffer grievously, and many more suffer, in consequence of my ignorance, precipitance, and folly!" A candidate for the ministry should dread nothing more than the Divine displeasure. What can be more awful, or more earnestly to be deprecated? If it be incurred, what error!—what difficulty!—what danger!—what sin!—what

misery! But it will be incurred and experienced if rashness, self-confidence, and a want of sound and adequate reflection induce him to rush into the ministry—to precipitate himself, blindly and heedlessly, forward.

There is nothing which will render a candidate for the holy office more happy, than to enjoy the Divine approval—to be convinced, from a variety of concurring circumstances, that the Lord is *pointing out* his way. It will be to him a source of exquisite and continual satisfaction. It will remove a thousand difficulties. It will suppress a thousand fears.

This is the spirit, candidates for the ministry, under whose influence you must assume the sacred office. You will have no Divine encouragement without it. You will have no happiness without it. You can have no blessing without it. Your desires to see the hand of God leading you must be ardent, yet submissive—intelligent, devout, unceasing.

You must leave no scriptural means unemployed, in order that the seal of Heaven may ratify your procedure—and that the approbation of Heaven may rejoice your hearts. The word of God must be diligently read—devoutly scrutinised; profound self-examination must be instituted; the most serious and searching inquiry must be pursued; fervid prayer must be directed to Heaven; and every legitimate and scriptural plan must be adopted, to see that you are taking *no false* step—that you are not moving, or *wishing* to move, *without God*. This is the temper in which you should come forward. This is the disposition in which your studies should be commenced and prosecuted. This is the spirit in which you should anticipate ministerial and pastoral labour.

If you have the Divine approval, what encouragement will be afforded!—what light from Heaven will descend upon you!—what “sunny radiance” will stream on your path!—what cheering tokens of the Divine kindness and love will

be furnished!—with what zest will you pursue your studies!—what peace and animation will be imparted to your minds!—what an impetus will be communicated to all your arrangements and efforts! When you perceive that God is directing you—that He is taking you by the hand, and leading you forward—when you, as it were, hear Him say, “This is the way, *walk ye in it*,”—how are you cheered and incited *at once*!—how are you quickened and invigorated! You see that God is with you, to control you, to appoint you your work, and to bless you. Your prayers are heard. Your apprehensions are silenced. Your warmest desires are gratified. What a fulness of joy will you then realise, and on what good may you calculate of being the instruments in effecting! For God will never induct you into the office, to be useless. He will not bring you into the vineyard, and leave you there. No, no! The desire which He himself has awakened—and which His providence has matured—His own Spirit will signally bless and honour. See to it, then, that you do not enter the ministry of the Gospel, without the *express sanction* of Heaven.

4. Candidates for the Christian ministry, anticipate your engagements with *deep seriousness*.

A minister of the Gospel must be no trifler—no light and frivolous individual; if he be, he acts most unworthily of the sacred office, and brings a perpetual reproach on his profession. And those who are *candidates* for the ministry cannot too sedulously guard against volatility of mind—“a light and feathery development of character and conduct,” as unseemly as pernicious. A young man, looking forward to the pastoral office, must be “grave, sober, weighty,” in all things. Deep-toned seriousness must mark his temper—his habits—his uniform deportment; it must pervade, characterise, absorb his mind. A jocose and trifling manner in recurring to the ministry shows, most clearly, that there has been no *Divine* call to the ministry. The

cultivation of a frivolous disposition, with the sacred office in prospect, furnishes the most decisive evidence that the Holy Spirit has never prepared for that office; for, when the Spirit of God calls a candidate to it, and qualifies him for the fulfilment of its obligations, he invariably awakens and maintains the most profound seriousness.

There is nothing which would sooner convince an enlightened and devout person, that a young man was never designed by the Head of the Church for the sacred work of the ministry, than the exhibition of habitual lightness and frivolity,—a giddiness—a volatility—and even a facetiousness—as undesirable as improper. Candidates for the holy ministry! can you be *too serious*, when you contemplate the *character* which you expect permanently to sustain? A character which all will observe. A character by which you will either honour or dishonour God. A character which will either be to you a crown of glory, or be associated with your degradation and disgrace. “A minister of God”—what a designation! “The servant of Jesus Christ”—what a character to exemplify! “The herald of salvation”—what an appellation by which to be distinguished! Should there not, then, be the continual embodiment of profound seriousness?

Besides, what a *work* is to engage your attention—call forth your faculties—and completely absorb your minds! A work whose engagements will be perpetually recurring, and whose arduousness will be increasingly felt. A work whose solitudes will be intense, and almost overpowering. Should not habitual seriousness, from a contemplation of the engagements before you, mark your conduct, and thoroughly pervade your minds?

What *responsibilities* will be imposed on you! You are to “feed the flock of God.”—(1 Peter v. ii.) You are to “study to show yourselves approved unto God.” You are “rightly to divide the word of truth.”—(2 Tim. ii. 15.) You are to “take heed unto yourselves, and unto the doctrine”

which you proclaim.—(1 Tim. iv. 16.) You are to “be examples to the believers, in word, in conversation, in charity, in spirit, in faith, in purity.”—(1 Tim. iv. 12.) You are to “watch for souls, as they that must give account.”—(Heb. xiii. 17.) You are to “preach not yourselves, but Christ Jesus the Lord.”—(2 Cor. iv. 5.) In a word, you are “to warn every man, and teach *every* man in all wisdom, that you may present *every man* perfect in Christ Jesus.”—(Col. i. 28.)

Are not these great and tremendous responsibilities, and should not the deepest seriousness, in the bare *anticipation* of their pressing on the spirit, be unfolded? It must be so, when the power of religion is felt—when the ministerial character is appreciated—when the value of the soul is properly estimated.

Consider, also, what results will issue from your ministry—results associated with the honour of God—the enlargement of the church—the happiness and salvation of hundreds, perhaps of thousands, who will dwell with Christ for ever. Your ministry may be, to *multitudes*, “the savour of life unto life—or of death unto death.”—(2 Cor. ii. 16.) What a reflection! Why, the very thought of entering on such an undertaking, pregnant with consequences so momentous and so awful, ought to inspire the most trembling solicitude!

Enter, then, on your studies, valued brethren, under the influence of profound seriousness. Be deeply impressed with the solemnity and inconceivable importance of the work to which you are looking forward. Let holy and deep-toned solemnity pervade the mind. A spirit, awakened by the Saviour himself, and ever regulated by his Word.

This is the appropriate temper to cherish, in prospect of the high and responsible duties of the ministry. No other, God can approve or bless. Besides, it will chasten all—elevate all—control all—imbue all. Eschew, then, habitually,

all levity; everything that is light, flippant, and frivolous. This is not to be your spirit. These are not to be your characteristics. Let it be seen, by all your conduct, *how deeply* you feel that "*the burden of the Lord*" is upon you!

5. Candidates for the sacred office, look forward to its engagements with *unfeigned and holy solicitude*.

Is not this solicitude spontaneously awakened in the mind of a godly and devoted young minister? Is it not most powerfully felt by him, when he contemplates the work on which he is entering—the grave responsibilities he will incur—the trials he will necessarily experience—the temptations he must encounter—the dangers to which he will be exposed—and the vast importance of eminent piety—of sleepless vigilance—of superior grace, in order that his fidelity may be maintained—his humility and love to Christ promoted—his energy in the Redeemer's service exhibited—his usefulness continued and augmented—his preservation until the end of life secured?

Should not similar solicitude be the characteristic of *every* candidate? Should he be able to recur to the ministry, its engagements, its responsibilities, its issues, without emotions of trembling anxiety pervading and absorbing his soul? Can he possibly anticipate the labours, trials, and dangers of the pastoral office, if he think and feel correctly, without being intensely solicitous, in relation to the performance of its onerous and multifarious duties—and the endurance of its innumerable cares and sorrows?

Candidates for the pastorate, you should uniformly be solicitous to cherish *a temper* becoming the ministry;—one harmonising with its engagements, its high and holy character, its avowed and ultimate design—one accordant with the Gospel—in unison with the designation which you bear—which the church will appreciate—which God himself will sanction and bless. How desirous should you feel to

cultivate and exemplify that humble, devout, holy, confiding, and heavenly temper, so beautiful in itself, and so necessary to be developed by all those who are about entering on the ministerial undertaking!

What solicitude should you cherish, that you may be *well qualified* for your sacred and arduous engagements! That there may be no ignorance; no crudeness of sentiment; that there may be no superficiality of mind or character; that there may be no want of high moral and religious endowments. How anxious should you be that the mind should be enlarged; that the views of Divine truth should be profound and realising; that all the gifts which are requisite for the efficient discharge of ministerial and pastoral duties should be possessed; and that all the graces of the Spirit of God, which are pre-eminently necessary to elevate and sanctify the character of the ministers of the Word, should be largely communicated, and developed in a clear and beautiful manner!

How solicitous, candidates for the ministry, should you be, to enter on the duties and trials of the sacred office with the utmost *firmness* and *vigour* of *mind*;—that you may not falter in your course—that you may not waver in your purpose—that you may not flinch, either in the prospect of your difficulties, or their endurance—that you may go steadily and boldly onwards, in the midst of neglect and coldness—in spite of all reproach and opposition—determined, by the help of your Lord and Saviour, to be “faithful” at your posts, “until death;” hoping and believing that he will then put you in possession, individually, of “the crown of life,” of “the crown of glory which fadeth not away.”

How anxiously should you feel, also, to discharge all the duties incumbent on you, under the influence of a passionate desire to *honour the Lord Jesus*! If you are his ambassadors, he sends you. If you are his servants, he not only commissions you, but qualifies you for his service. If you

are his soldiers, he equips you, furnishes you with offensive and defensive weapons, and fits you to "endure hardness, as good soldiers of Jesus Christ."—(2 Tim. ii. 3.) And, remember, you are appointed, qualified, sent out to perform labour, to grapple with difficulty, to achieve conquests, *simply* that you may glorify the Saviour! How solicitous, then, you should be to regard the honour of Christ supremely, exclusively—and to employ those means—breathe that spirit—fulfil those engagements, in connexion with which the honour of the Redeemer, as "the Head of the Church," as "the King of Glory," will be most effectually subserved."

This is the spirit in which you should contemplate the ministry—anticipate the ministry—and continually prepare for the ministry. Where there is no deep-felt and holy solicitude, similar to that which we have been describing, there can be no preparedness for the sacred office by the Spirit of God, and no blessing in the expectation of its arduous and spiritual duties.

6. Candidates for the Christian ministry, in looking forward to your great undertaking, cherish *melting compassion* on behalf of sinners.

That compassion which originates from the most enlightened and scriptural views of their miserable and benighted condition, which is prompted by the love of Christ operating on the soul, and which is ever fed and increased by that love. Is there any temper, in the prospect of the ministry, more valuable or more necessary than this? Indeed, *can* you refrain from its development and cultivation, when you contemplate the *ignorance* of sinners? What do they know, experimentally, of the Gospel?—of its beauty—its adaptation—its holiness—its preciousness—the plan of salvation which it unfolds? What do they know of the Redeemer?—of the surpassing excellence of his character—of the perfection of his work—of the efficacy and glory of his

sacrifice—of the power and necessity of his intercession in heaven? What do they know of sin?—of its odiousness—of its extreme and infinite malignity—of its being “that abominable thing” which God hates and loathes? What do they know of themselves?—of “the plague of their own hearts”—of the power of unmortified corruption—of their exceeding impurity and offensiveness, in the presence of the Being of infinite holiness and love?

When you contemplate the *moral degradation* of sinners, what compassion ought you to cherish! How they are debased by their iniquities! What a spectacle must they present before the Saviour, and the angels of God! By their errors—their prejudices against the truth—their enmity against God—their opposition to the pure and benign requirements of the Gospel—their love of pleasure—their fixed antipathy to holiness—their delight in sin—their resolute contempt of the Divine administration—what a picture of moral and spiritual degradation is unfolded!—one as vivid as it is humbling, affecting, mournful!

When you contemplate the *extreme danger* of sinners, what compassion should you cherish! Iniquity has continual dominion over them, yet they are not sensible that their guilt is constantly accumulating, and that their peril is constantly becoming more fearful. The devil is continually presenting his temptations before them; and there is no repugnance, no opposition. They yield, at once, without any thought of their transgression or their danger. Thus they become the victims of temptation. Thus it is apparent that they are “taken captive by the devil at his will.” “There is but a step between them and death”—between them and eternity—between them and hell—and, yet, they are unconcerned, reckless, and insensible; indeed, they proceed, laughing and revelling as they advance, as though no situation could be safer, or more enviable, than theirs! When these circumstances, so deplorable and heart-rending, are contemplated, can you, as enlightened and holy

candidates for the ministerial office, refrain from exclaiming, "O that they were wise, that they understood this, that they *would consider* their latter end!"—(Deut. xxxii. 29.)

This is to be your spirit, in relation to ignorant, degraded, unconverted sinners, while you are looking forward to the full discharge of the duties of the pastorate. You must cherish the tenderest and most compassionate disposition. You must abound in pity and benevolent sympathy. You must be transformed into love.

Your compassion for sinners must be spontaneously felt—be intensely experienced—be uniformly manifested; and it must lead you to vigorous and noble efforts to rescue them from their danger—to raise them from their degradation—to "pluck them as brands from the burning"—to deliver them from hell—to advance them to the bliss and glory of heaven.

This compassion for sinners will render you elastic, yet firm, in your labours to benefit and bless them. It will make you easy of access to them—ready to employ any means of doing them good. It will be the very way to *get into their hearts*. And if this compassion be cherished by you, springing from real principle, it will be *inextinguishable*. Nothing will be able to suppress it. It will be a part of your very nature. It will resemble the compassion of the Saviour himself, which was always developed, in the midst of the most trying difficulties—the most determined opposition—the most relentless persecution. It will be a love, a benevolence towards sinners which "many waters cannot quench, nor the floods drown." Indeed, difficulty will only increase it. Opposition will only render it more striking in its manifestation. Persecution will only induce you to cherish it more fervently.

It will be the spirit of Brainerd—of Swartz—of Vanderkemp—of Williams—of Elliot—of Henry Martyn—of Whitfield—of Paul. Your language will be that of the compassionate apostle—"For God is my record, *how greatly*

I long after you all, in *the bowels* of Jesus Christ.”—(Philippians i. 8.)

7. Candidates for the ministry, in anticipating the sacred office, *cultivate entire reliance on the Spirit of God.*

It must, unquestionably, not be an *ignorant* reliance, but one originating from the most luminous and comprehensive views of the Christian character, of the Christian system, and of the great and arduous work to which you profess to be devoted.

It must not be a *presumptuous* reliance. One unwarranted by Scripture, unsustained by the example and requirements of Christ and his apostles. It must not be a reliance dissociated from laborious and continuous study, and from vigorous and persevering effort. Reliance on the Spirit of God, without vigilance, reflection, and energetic exertion, is bold and unwarrantable presumption, and no blessing will be connected with it. Against this, therefore, you must most sedulously guard. The Holy Spirit will never encourage the presuming, the careless, the slothful; he blesses those who are diligent, laborious, untiring. Still, he demands your reliance, and that reliance he will always honour. And we would remind you, that your reliance on the Spirit of God, in the anticipation of the Christian ministry, must be prompted and impelled by the conviction,—

That He must furnish *the requisite gifts*. All the acquaintance with language—all the self-possession and facility of utterance—all the sound and accurate learning—all the vigour and compass of thought—all the knowledge of human nature—all the adaptation of mind to reach the people generally—all the capacity for study, and improvement from study, which are so desirable and necessary on the part of those who are consecrated to the sacred work.

Your reliance on the Holy Spirit must spring from the conviction, that He must bestow *the graces* which are indispensable. That Divine wisdom—that meekness and gentle-

ness—that deep humility—that glowing zeal—that ardent love—that submission to the will of God—that eminent spirituality—that boldness and heroism—in a word, that distinguished sanctity of character which ought to beautify and ennoble those who are looking forward to the pastoral office.

Your reliance on the Spirit of God must be, at once, sustained and impelled by the conviction, that, without His agency, there will be *no fitness* for the work of the ministry, and *no efficiency* in discharging its duties. He must communicate all the intellectual, moral, and religious endowments which are pre-eminently necessary for the ministry, and he must apply them all, and render them all subservient to the accomplishment of the noblest purposes, even those of infinite wisdom and redeeming mercy. We ask you, can you possibly rely on the Holy Spirit too much?—too sincerely—too implicitly—after all the knowledge you may acquire—all the studies you may pursue—all the designs you may form—all the labours you may execute? If you think and feel correctly, you will, at once, respond,—“It is impossible!”

How can you *honour* the Spirit of God, without this simplicity of reliance? This unhesitating, this unreserved confidence in his character—his purposes—his promises—his agency?

How can you realise *his blessing*, without it? He will never impart it, where there is not *affectionate* and *entire* dependance—a dependance originating from the deepest conviction, that, unless He be present in the ministry, to enlighten, to succour, to apply, there will be no living power accompanying the exhibition even of “the truth as it is in Jesus.”

The *secret* of your acceptance and success, both now and eventually, in connexion with the sacred work, will be, not human learning, however extensive—human energy, however commanding—human abilities, however original and splendid, but *Divine grace*, accompanying all your studies, applying

all your discourses, and blessing all your efforts. "Not by might, nor by power, but by *my Spirit*, saith the Lord of hosts."—(Zechariah iv. 6.)

Candidates for the holy ministry! In the midst of all your inquiries and studies, with the sacred office in prospect, *rely implicitly* on the Spirit of God, that your investigations and acquirements may be sanctified and blest. In looking forward to all your labours, all your solitudes, all your trials—in cherishing ardent desires to be useful—repose unbounded confidence in the Spirit of God, and you will invariably find, that *that* confidence will not be put to shame. Increasingly, and *ever*, feel, that there will be no light imparted to the mind—no life be communicated to the soul—no power be realised in connexion with the truth—in a word, that the work of conversion *cannot go forward* without Him;—unless his agency be exerted—his influence be shed—his presence enliven—his grace renew and sanctify. While, then, looking forward, with trembling solicitude, to the ministry of the Gospel, regard it as an indubitable principle, that those who, in prospect of the work, rely on the Spirit the most implicitly, and honour the Spirit the most fully, are the ministers who, in the discharge of their regular duties, are *the most signally blest*.

VIII. Candidates for the Christian ministry, with the sacred office in view, let there be *a determination to study and labour assiduously*.

In the prospect of such an undertaking as that of the pastorate, involving duties so multifarious, so responsible and arduous—difficulties so complicated and peculiar—and circumstances requiring, frequently, so much intellectual cultivation, as well as moral energy—this determination is essential. You will find it always necessary to maintain it, in order that your fitness for the ministry may be apparent, and that your respectability and weight may be observed and appreciated.

This determination to study and labour must be *spontaneous*. It must not be the result of necessity, or mere circumstances ; it must be voluntarily formed, and adhered to, from love to the Saviour—from love to the Church of Christ—from deep anxiety to be well prepared for the work, and efficient in the discharge of its engagements.

This determination must be *enlightened*. It must be expressed and maintained, after intelligent and impartial examination of the Word of God—after duly reflecting on the dignity and importance of the ministerial character, and the arduousness of the ministerial undertaking.

This determination must, also, be *fixed*—deliberately and seriously formed, and resolutely carried out—so that the engagements of the student, the preacher, and the pastor, may be uniformly and honourably fulfilled.

In looking forward to the ministry, the habit of various, diligent, and thoughtful reading must be pursued. Sound and useful inquiries must be conducted. Classical, philosophical, ethical, and especially theological, investigations must be maintained.

The intellectual faculties must be well cultivated and disciplined. You must accustom yourselves to trains of vigorous and independent thinking, on every valuable subject, and, pre-eminently, on those subjects which will be the most prominent and vital, in connexion with your future labours.

Indolent habits of mind must be vigilantly guarded against. They will deform—impoverish—injure increasingly—effectually disgrace.

In the expectation of the pastoral office, there must be unceasing attention paid to mental and moral culture, else, instead of rising, you will be sure to *sink*. Let the traces of former knowledge be revived and deepened in your minds, by habits of reading and reflection, and be continually multiplied. This is the correct feeling to cherish, in prospect of the ministerial office.

And let it ever be borne in mind by you, that, if these studious exercises are not prosecuted by you, the greatest natural ability, the amplest resources, will soon fail, and be exhausted. It has been observed, with equal discrimination and beauty—"The sameness or affinity of the topics on which a minister is called to expatiate, requires a perpetual variety in the modes of illustration and enforcement, and the exercise of a holy and diligent ingenuity. The most felicitous combinations of fancy, the most original creations of genius, combined with the most laborious efforts of thought and reasoning, are required to impart the charm of novelty, and the power of impression, to themes so constantly recurring as those of the Christian ministry."*

While, then, you are anticipating the sacred office, let your determination be formed, in reliance on Divine strength, to *study hard*, and to *labour hard*. Let this resolve be early induced, and, from principle, most diligently maintained, and the habit of reading, reflection, and vigorous mental culture, will continue with you during the whole of life. It will grow with your growth, and strengthen with your strength,—thus you will be constantly enriching your minds, disciplining and invigorating your faculties; your weight, intellectually and morally, will be increasing, and "your profiting will appear to all men."

Candidates for the pastoral office must regard it as an *established* position, that a minister, at the present period, and, especially, in such a country as ours, without diligent reading and well-digested thought—without the cultivation of the powers of observation, retention, and combination, will accomplish very little. He will secure no weight—command no influence—exert no intellectual or moral power.

IX. Candidates for the ministry, anticipate the great work before you, under the influence of *fervid and wrestling prayer*.

* Joseph Hughes, M.A.

There must be a spirit of importunate and prevailing prayer, that you may enter on the sacred work *in God's strength*, and not in your own; that you may have his knowledge to enlighten you—his wisdom to direct you—his power to fortify and succour you—his grace to enrich, purify, and bless you. How desirable, how necessary it is, as you are looking forward to the ministry, to be convinced, and powerfully to feel, that, in answer to confiding and earnest prayer, you are invigorated by Divine energy, and sustained and blessed by the presence and fulness of omnipotent love. Abound, then, in prayer, that God's strength may be developed in connexion with you.

It is indispensable that you present unceasing prayer, in order that you may be qualified, in the *highest sense*, for the ministerial undertaking:—that there may be a broad and beautiful exhibition of those Christian graces—of those noble endowments, both of mind and heart, which are requisite for the honourable and efficient discharge of the engagements which will, throughout life, devolve on you. You cannot be *too well* furnished for the ministry. The mind cannot be too expanded, vigorous, or elevated—the heart cannot be too much enriched and ennobled by the Spirit of God—and you must secure these high and celestial bestowments, in connexion with wrestling and abounding prayer.

You must cultivate this devotional habit most fervently, that you may have, at all times, a blessing on yourselves personally, and in association with your future ministry; that you may walk in God's light—be baptised by God's Spirit—live continually in the enjoyment of God's presence—realise, under all circumstances, God's favour—be ever succoured by God's grace—be perpetually consoled by God's promises to his servants. A devoted student for the ministry, abounding in prayer for a blessing on himself, in prospect of the work, has never found that the blessing of Heaven has been withheld, or scantily bestowed.

Besides, fervent prayer, and the tokens of Divine regard in 'connexion with your future labours, will be inseparable. Light will be imparted to many minds, in answer to your prayers. Direction of the most important kind will be afforded to many an anxious inquirer, in reply to your earnest supplications. The hard and obdurate heart of many a sinner will be softened and melted by the love of Christ, as a gracious return to your importunate petitions. Many will be brought to repentance—drawn to Christ—admitted to the church—prepared for glory, as an acknowledgment that your fervid entreaties have come up, “for a memorial before God,”—and that, when he is solicited by his servants for a blessing on their present or prospective engagements, they find him to be “a God hearing and answering prayer.”

No godly young man can think of the ministry *without prayer*. All his plans, studies, engagements, enjoyments, successes, are identified with prayer, and inseparable from it. Were he to anticipate the ministry without much prayer, he would consider it to be most improper—most disreputable—most dangerous. There is nothing, with the holy ministry in view, respecting which he is more anxious, than that he may develop a spirit of abounding prayer—that prayer which God will regard, and which will return to him and others in “showers of spiritual blessings.”

He cannot enter on any intellectual pursuits, which will conduce to his preparedness for the ministry, without much prayer that all may be sanctified, and subserve those ends by whose accomplishment God will be glorified.

He is unable to prosecute any of his engagements, in prospect of the ministry, without imploring the succours of Divine grace, and the enjoyment of the Divine blessing. He feels that he can do nothing without God, but *everything with him*. In this way, the candidate for the pastorate shows, and that most clearly, that he is under the influence and control of the Holy Spirit—that he is directed by his intimations—that he is renewed by his grace—and that he

not only realises his operations, but his blessing. It is thus that he "takes hold of God's strength"—is qualified for his work by Divine communications—"goes forth in God's might;" and, when he enters on the pastoral office, fully determined, in reliance on the grace of the Saviour, to perform its arduous engagements, there is "an unction from the Holy One" resting upon him, by which "the mysteries of the kingdom" are penetrated, and he is enabled to glorify God in all things.

This is the spirit, valued brethren, under the influence of which you must contemplate, and anticipate, the work of the ministry. No other will be appropriate or scriptural. No other will be sufficient. No other will harmonise with your character and profession. No other God will regard and bless.

It must, too, be your *prevailing* temper. Prayer must precede all—accompany all—follow all. It must dictate all—beautify all—control all—and render all efficacious. It is stated, with regard to the Rev. Pliny Fisk, when a student, that he was pre-eminently distinguished by his *devotional* habits—*by his intercourse with God*. His biographer mentions, that "He was eminently a man of prayer. On the Sabbath particularly, his soul seemed to be drawn *so near* to God and heaven, that it cost a reluctant effort to bring back his mind to the business of this life. He was always careful to avoid all study, reading, and conversation, that did not *tend directly* to aid devotion."*

This is the spirit in which you ought to look forward to the ministry. It is one after which you should constantly aspire; one which you should ardently breathe. Candidates for the sacred office, is it your disposition? Are you eminently *men of prayer*? While you regard your responsible and arduous engagements, are you unceasingly imploring Divine light to illumine you—Divine wisdom to guide

* Vide the Memoir of the Rev. Pliny Fisk, American missionary to Palestine; a choice volume for a student.

you—Divine power to guard you—Divine grace to bless you? If not, you had better think of any employment than that of the ministry. If you enter it *without* prayer, *much* prayer—believing, confiding, and agonising prayer—prayer which evinces what you really are—instead of being honourable, you will be degraded; instead of being happy, you will be miserable; instead of having a blessing from God, there will be nothing but a blight, and *a curse*. Ponder these things, we beseech you, and, with the ministry before you, “take heed to your spirit, that you deal not treacherously!” —(Malachi ii. 16.)

CHAPTER V.

THE MOTIVES TO JUSTIFY AN ENTRANCE ON THE MINISTRY.

MOTIVES are impelling considerations, to induce some particular course of action, and to regulate and control the mind in pursuing that course, so that the object contemplated and desired may be attained. The motives,—the governing, the absorbing considerations, inciting a devout candidate to an entrance on the ministry of the Gospel, are of the gravest, as well as the sublimest, character; and they cannot be too calmly and minutely examined—too clearly understood—too highly appreciated. It is palpable, that no person should think of entering the ministry, without *well weighing his motives* for desiring the sacred office. It must be a sober, scriptural, searching investigation. There must be no disguise—no concealment—no evasion. Nothing must be kept back. No personal or inferior considerations must be allowed to operate. Everything must be fairly tested. The all-important question must be distinctly proposed, as in God's sight, and with eternity in view—“*Why do I wish to assume the sacred office?*” And that question must be answered in the most impartial, decisive, and unhesitating manner.

Motives to induce an entrance on the Christian ministry should be *enlightened*. They should originate from the most intelligent thoughts—be prompted by the most enlightened considerations—be sustained and enforced by the most enlightened convictions. If a young man be not able to give a clear and intelligent statement of his motives for desiring the ministerial undertaking, it is apparent that he has never

been designed by the Head of the Church for its duties and trials—its privileges and successes.

Motives to induce an entrance on the ministry should be *pure*. They should not merely spring from an enlightened mind, but from a heart renewed and sanctified by Divine grace. They should be holy considerations, awakened and maintained by the Holy Spirit of God, and leading a candidate, step by step, under the influence of elevated sentiments, to enter on the holiest of undertakings.

Motives to induce an entrance on the ministry should *harmonise with Christianity*. They should be in unison with all its requirements—accord with all its directions—correspond with all its obligations and claims—and be perfectly congenial with its spirit.

Motives to induce an entrance on the ministry should be *adequate*. There should be nothing feeble or superficial. They should be well sustained. The foundation should be broad and firm, well able to bear the weight of the structure reared on it. They should commend themselves, at once, to the understanding, the judgment, the conscience, the heart. They should be so sound and excellent in themselves, and it should be so demonstrated that they originate from the Spirit of God, as that there may be no mistake committed, no uncertainty experienced.

What motives, then, will control the mind, and govern the heart of a devoted candidate for the ministry? We recur to five, which may be viewed as the principal considerations.

MOTIVE I.—To carry out *the designs of Divine Providence*.

We believe that the providence of God is never more clearly exhibited than with regard to the work of the Christian ministry, and those who are designed, by their eminent piety and marked qualifications, for the sacred office. The purposes of Divine Providence are gradually, but decisively unfolded—and the object to be accomplished is developed in

a very beautiful and impressive manner. Every young man who is contemplating the ministry should be exceedingly anxious to *mark* these designs—attentively and profoundly to observe them, and to have them realised in connexion with his personal history—with his public and permanent ministrations. Providence has a voice; it often speaks most distinctly and powerfully—and he should studiously and devoutly endeavour to interpret, and give practical effect to its communications.

If God, in the arrangements of his unerring providence, direct a young man to the work of the ministry, there are designs to be accomplished with regard to the candidate himself. For example—

That he may be placed in his *right position*. That he may occupy the precise situation which he ought to fill—that he may sustain the very character which he ought to bear and exemplify. A candidate for the sacred office, if he think and feel correctly, will cherish an ardent desire to enter the ministry, provided such be the will of God—that he may occupy his right position—fill the precise trust which the wisdom and goodness of Divine Providence have allotted to him.

It is the design of Providence, in the case of a devoted candidate for the ministry, that his *talents may be unfolded* in connexion with the *best of all causes*; that the clearness and force of his understanding—the variety and richness of his acquisitions—the originality, vigour, and elevation of his mind—may be developed in alliance with the Gospel—and all be brought to bear on the application and enforcement of the truth, and the advancement of the cause of the Redeemer.

It is, moreover, the design of Providence, that a young man intended for the holy ministry should have the graces, which beautify and distinguish his Christian character, brought out and exercised, for the illustration and exaltation of the work of God, and for the accomplishment of the

Divine purposes. *That* love to the Saviour, which is his prominent feature; that deep humility, which is one of his greatest moral charms; that enlightened and holy zeal, which glows within him like a flame; that meekness, patience, and submission, which are so attractive; that eminent spirituality, by which he not only mounts up to heaven, but dwells in heaven; that supreme desire to obey the will of God, which is so valuable and necessary; are all to be unfolded by him, as the monument of Divine mercy, and that he may be "a pattern to those who believe;" and all these holy energies are to be called into requisition, for the exaltation of Divine grace, and for the permanent benefit of others. These are some of the designs of Providence to be carried out, in connexion with the Christian ministry; and candidates for the sacred office should be intensely solicitous to mark these designs, and to observe their gradual development. Not only so, but, with the ministry in view, they should feel peculiarly anxious to *fulfil* these designs—and that, as they advance in life, and in the prosecution of their labours, their history may furnish a beautiful and decisive illustration of the purposes of Infinite wisdom and goodness, for their own satisfaction and advantage, and for the encouragement and benefit of others.

How anxious was Matthew Henry that the designs of Divine Providence should be exemplified and fulfilled by his entrance into the ministry! His early history, in his invaluable "Life," by Tong, furnishes a striking exposition of this sentiment.

How desirous was the amiable and holy Doddridge to have the purposes of Providence realised in connexion with himself—and all the steps by which he was inducted into the ministerial office! How strikingly were those purposes carried out—how delightfully accomplished!

The following passage from the "Life of the Rev. John Cooke, of Maidenhead," by Doctor Redford, is very impressive, and very suggestive to those who are desirous of

entering the ministry:—"Mr. Cooke's mind had been anxiously exercised, in reference to the work of the ministry, from the earliest stage of his religious experience. Young converts, especially if their conversion has been sudden, or very joyful, commonly experience a serious desire to become useful to others, and many aspire to the thought of preaching. But, in most cases, it is not a permanent desire. Difficulties and fears suppress it, or a consciousness of inability, induced by a little reflection, enforces them to remain in a humbler station. Frequently, the desire accompanies our state of 'first love,' or arises out of the first joyous discovery of the importance and excellence of the Gospel. Then it subsides, as the great themes of redemption lose their novelty, or as the rapture of first enjoyments passes away. But the case was different with Mr. Cooke. Perhaps, in this he differed not from most men who have been divinely called to the ministry. His desire to serve God increased, as his mind became familiar with the truth. The more he studied the Scriptures, the more enamoured did he become with the grace of the Gospel, and the more zealous to proclaim it to his fellows. His arduous employment had no effect in damping his zeal. Opportunities of mental improvement developed talents of a very peculiar order, and from the *crisis of circumstances* in which *Providence* placed him, by seeming to open one door, as soon as another was shut, and by making his *first* attempts at public speaking so far acceptable as to induce a regular congregation, and a church which had been established nearly a century, to invite him to their pulpit for six months,—all these things, concurring with the hidden thought of his heart, which had never slept for *two* years, contributed to give his first step a firmness, a manly port, which marked *all his future progress*."* Thus Providence was illustrated—thus the designs of God were fulfilled.

In looking forward, then, to the ministry, candidates for

* Vide Life of Cooke, 8vo. edition, page 37.

the sacred office, let it be one of your leading motives, in contemplating the work, that the purposes of Divine Providence may be exemplified and realised.

MOTIVE II.—To exhibit your *decided predilection for the service of the Redeemer, rather than the service of the world.*

This will be a powerful motive with every holy and devoted candidate for the sacred office; a consideration which will stimulate him exceedingly. He ardently desires to be engaged in the ministry of the Gospel, because it is, *pre-eminently*, the work of Christ—because it is an employment, which will not only bring him in contact with the Saviour's cause, but which will require him to be *identified* with that cause, and *wholly devoted* to its interests. His physical energies will be given to that cause; his acquirements will be consecrated to it; and all his mental and Christian endowments will be cheerfully, and for ever, dedicated to unfold its excellence—to advocate its claims—to extend its influence. He has a decided and growing bias for this work. The service of Christ, in connexion with the holy ministry, constitutes the very delight of his soul. His language is,—“O that I may be engaged in that work! O that I may spend and be spent in that service! There is no anticipation in which I so much delight, as to be labouring in connexion with the cause of the Redeemer, and concentrating my energies, day after day, year after year, for its wider and wider diffusion!” When God calls him, secular pursuits,—however honourable in themselves, and, in a pecuniary sense, advantageous,—will be readily abandoned. The engagements and excitements of commerce, the prospect even of securing opulence, will have no charms for him, when the service of Jesus Christ is placed in competition with them. When the Redeemer asks him the question, “Would you rather labour in my cause, and serve my cause, than be engaged in secular concerns—those avocations which are connected with the world, however lawful, and,

in themselves, unobjectionable?" — his heart, at once, responds, and with the utmost fervour, "Lord, I will serve thee, and thy cause! That service is my *first*, my *absorbing*, my *last* desire!"

Thus the truly enlightened and pious candidate will think and feel, while looking forward to the ministry; and, in reply to the inquiry, "Why is the ministry so strongly desired?" these will be the considerations, so natural and proper, influencing his mind, and governing his procedure. He will realise, at all times, and with continually increasing power, that everything which relates to the cause of Christ is *supremely* interesting to him: in unison with his most enlightened views—accordant with his best and most benevolent emotions—at once enkindling his noblest energies—awakening his holiest passions—and inspiring his most vivid and delightful associations.

Candidates for the ministry! seriously inquire, whether this motive is a powerful consideration, impelling you to go forward, and dedicate yourselves to the service of Christ, and the advancement of his cause? With business on one side, and the service of the sanctuary on the other—how do you feel? Which has your heart? With the prospect of ease and affluence, if you remain out of the ministry, and the certainty of unceasing labour—much hardship—frequent opposition—powerful temptations—and many anxieties, if you sustain the sacred office—what is your decision? What are your emotions? Have you any hesitancy with regard to your preference? Is there any uncertainty in respect of your choice? Impossible, provided you love Christ, and are called by him to the work of God! Impossible, provided your motives for desiring the ministry are scriptural and pure! You will not hesitate *one moment*. Your minds will be fully decided. The passion of your souls will be demonstrated. The service of Christ will be *everything* to you. It will be seen that it has your hearts. It will be your ruling, your absorbing, desire, not only to aid it, but

to be *incorporated* with it. Every other engagement, however honourable and lucrative, you will regard as being *immeasurably* inferior—unworthy of being named in connexion with it. You will not, you cannot, institute any comparison, between the service of the Redeemer, and that which is at all allied with this world. You would rather be “hewers of wood, and drawers of water,” for the benefit of the sanctuary, than be engaged in the most dignified and lucrative employments of a purely *secular* character and design. Indeed, so strong will be your love to the service of Christ, if you enter the ministry from right motives, that you will be ready to encounter any difficulty—endure any toil—experience any privation—realise any obloquy and persecution—rather than not be occupied in *that* sacred work, which has warmed the love—fired the zeal—elicited and augmented the energies—ministered to the happiness—and promoted the usefulness of the wisest, the holiest, and the noblest men, from generation to generation, until this hour.

MOTIVE III.—To be the *instrument of communicating good to man.*

This consideration will, and must, prevail with every right-minded candidate for the sacred office. All his anticipations of the ministry, and all his preparations for it, will be associated with ardent and inextinguishable desires to benefit his fellow-creatures. It will be apparent, by every step which he takes—every plan which he forms—every prayer which he prefers—every effort which he indulges—that this is his governing, his paramount consideration. “I wish to be useful—I long to be useful—I am anxious *only* to live to be useful”—is the language employed—is the spirit breathed—by every enlightened and holy aspirant for the Christian ministry.

He longs to be the agent of effecting *the highest good*—good to the soul—regarding “the soul as the man.” He

earnestly desires to be the honoured instrument, employed by God, of renovating its faculties—purifying its passions—ennobling and giving a celestial direction and impulse to its emotions, its sensibilities, and all its affections. Contemplating the ministry, this is the object of his benevolent and holy ambition.

He longs to be the instrument of effecting *extensive good*. Good not merely to one, but to many. He hopes, if introduced to the work, and permitted, during some years, to labour for God, that, through his instrumentality, numbers will acknowledge that he has been employed as the medium of conveying to them the blessings of salvation;—and though, in very many instances, he will never ascertain the *amount* of his usefulness, yet he cherishes the inspiring thought, provided God sends him into the ministry, and renders him faithful and earnest, that he cannot labour without *some good* being imparted,—and thus, in the course of years, no inconsiderable number will be enlightened, benefited, and blessed.

The holy candidate for the ministry longs to be the instrument of communicating *permanent good*. He is sensible that a minister of the Gospel, who is solicitous to honour the Saviour, labours for eternity;—his studies—his preaching—his plans—his efforts—have respect to eternity, and bear on eternity; and, in looking forward to the ministry, he wishes supremely to regard this—that there may be blessings, through his ministrations, bestowed, which will be realised *for ever*—enjoyed, in all their fulness and grandeur, during a glorious immortality. “How I long”—expresses the holy candidate—“to be employed by God, in rescuing one sinner from the pit of *eternal* destruction—in ‘plucking one brand from the *eternal* burning’—in advancing one soul to the glory and *interminable* blessedness of heaven.” This is his ambition in the prospect of entering the ministry. The thought dwells with him by day—continues with him by night—absorbs his mind—takes possession of his whole soul.

Candidates for the sacred office! see that this is your governing consideration—operating with commanding and ever-increasing power on the mind. Test yourselves, most seriously and impartially, with regard to this point:—“In contemplating the ministry, is it our great, our *one desire*, to do good to man? To do good to man as a sinner, involved in the condemnation of the law, and, hence, liable to eternal punishment?—good to man as a responsible creature, who will soon be required to give an account of the deeds done in the body, ‘according to that he hath done, whether good or bad?’—(2 Cor. v. 10;)—good to man as an immortal being—whose existence will never terminate—whose bliss or misery will never end?” With these solemn and overwhelming thoughts before you, inquire what are your reflections? what your emotions? what your desires? Can you resign many things of an earthly nature, however you might have prized them before, in order that you may be the instruments—highly favoured, highly honoured—of conveying lasting benefit to your fellow-creatures, who, at present, are living without an interest in Christ—any hope of immortality which will happily terminate—any sense of religion, though death and eternity are so near? Do you regard the anticipation as being associated with much dignity and bliss—of being permitted to live *simply* that you may proclaim the Gospel—show to the people “the way of salvation”—and exhort and conjure them to enter on that way? Do you realise ineffable pleasure in the prospect of bearing into the domestic circle the name of Jesus—of being preachers of the Word “from house to house”—of being the instructors of the ignorant—the guides and admonishers of the young—the helpers of the weak—the comforters of the sorrowful and broken-hearted—the reprovers of the backslider, the inconsistent, the heedless? If you think as you ought to think—and feel as you ought to feel—in the anticipation of the ministry, you will, *at once*, respond—“This is all our ambition! This will

constitute 'our glory and joy!'" And can you wonder at this? Impossible! for "these are prerogatives such as ambition may most pant to secure, and gratitude stretch forward to acknowledge."

"I trust, I often feel," said an admirable young candidate for the ministry, who subsequently proved himself to be a most able and devoted pastor, "a fervent desire after usefulness, inexpressible delight in the prospect of it, and some resolutions, in the strength of the Lord, to aim after it. I trust, I am not deceiving myself when I say this is the *principal motive* which influences me. This, I am sure, first excited it, and, now, I *never* could be satisfied, or enter on the work with happiness, if I thought *souls would not be given me for my hire*. The seasons in which I feel most anxiously longing for it, are not when most struck with the externals, but when, 'sitting at the feet of Jesus,' I most feel the preciousness of Christ; when under the powerful impression of the value of souls, the solemnities of death, judgment, and eternity—when I can pass by the world and future ages on to the bar of God, and there see 'every man receiving according to his work.'"

MOTIVE IV.—To *edify and enlarge the Church of Christ*.

If called by God to the work of the ministry, you will have to labour for Christ in the church—and for the *express benefit* of the church. And what a reflection this is for the devoted ministerial candidate to cherish, and by which to have his mind powerfully and constantly impelled! "I expect *always* to be engaged in the service of the church—*always* to have my energies concentrated on its behalf:—'the church of God which he hath purchased with his own blood!'"—(Acts xx. 28.) This thought should be calmly and maturely weighed by every individual contemplating the ministry. Indeed, it should be one of the prominent motives governing his mind, while anxious to embark in the great undertaking. What consideration, candidates for

the sacred office, can be grander or more important? What motive can be more operative or more impressive than the following,—that you are to be the ministers of the church; that you are to be devoted, and *devoted for ever*, to the service of the sanctuary?

You will have to instruct the church more and more in the great principles of the Gospel. It will be your constant business to be expositors of the Word, for the benefit of the church. By the simplicity and clearness of your pulpit addresses; by the luminous and persuasive manner in which you unfold the doctrines of Christianity; by the experimental and realising character of your preaching; by your appropriate, enlarged, and striking illustrations of Divine truth, the members of the church will be increasingly enlightened. Their conceptions of the Gospel will be clearer and more profound. They will see more of its beauty—appreciate its excellence more highly—and take a larger and more delightful view of its discoveries and promises. Many a difficulty will be explained. Many a problem will be solved. Many a doubt will be removed. Ought not this consideration to impel you powerfully—and at once absorb your minds, and rejoice your hearts?

Besides, when contemplating the ministry, you should remember, that, if you are the *called* servants of Jesus Christ, you will be made the honoured instruments of *extending* the *boundaries* of the church. Its territory is yet limited. It is to be widened materially. The power of sin is to be subdued. The dominion of Satan is to be checked. The influence of the world is to be restrained. The reign of Christ is to be universal. You are to be employed by God, as his agents, in multiplying the resources, and in augmenting the triumphs, of the church. Through you, as chosen, yet unworthy, instruments, the church of Christ may be enlarged. Not only will difficulties be removed out of the way, but accessions will be made to it—and, probably, *large* accessions. One candidate for the sacred work, full

of love, full of zeal, full of the Spirit of God—may be the honoured instrument of bringing *hundreds* into the church, before he is taken to glory, to wear the promised crown. And those hundreds of sincere converts may be the means of drawing *hundreds more*; and thus, during generations, a faithful and successful minister may still be proving a blessing to the people—a lasting benefit to the church of God. Weigh this thought, you who are designed for the holy office! Does it not strike you? Does it not powerfully excite you? Does it not deeply humble you? Is it not felt by you as a motive, stirring the soul to its lowest depths?

Bear in mind, also, that, if God send you into the ministry, you will be honoured as instruments in *building up* many of the members and adherents of the church “in their most holy faith.” Through your labours, under God, they will be increasingly established in the divinity and importance of the doctrines of the Gospel. Their confidence in the assurances of Christianity will be augmented. Their trust in the Saviour’s love will be confirmed and matured. Their reliance on the agency and grace of the Holy Spirit will become more simple and entire. Their expectations of the blessedness and unfading glory of heaven will be rendered more joyful and realising.

Now, we ask, are not these delightful considerations, under the influence of which to anticipate the ministry? Are they not sufficient to make the heart of a holy candidate to leap with joy? Do these considerations move and impel *you*? Are they with *you* prominent and controlling sentiments? Is it your motive, in anticipating the sacred office, to benefit the church?—to enlarge the church?—to multiply its friends, to diminish its enemies? Do you wish to *live*, in order that you may carry out this spirit—pursue these efforts—and, by the Divine blessing, achieve these results? Then your minds have been properly enlightened—your hearts have been divinely influenced—and,

in due time, your steps will be wisely and efficiently directed.

MOTIVE V.—*To glorify the Lord Jesus.*

In the contemplation of the ministry, if it be appropriately regarded, this must be the *absorbing* thought; this must be the paramount—the crowning motive. The devout and holy candidate feels as Paul felt, while all his energies were braced, and all his powers were in full play—“For to me to live is Christ.”—(Phil. i. 21.) That language he deliberately employs—that spirit he wishes uniformly and pre-eminently to breathe. “The health, activity, and energy of my body are my Lord’s; the acquisitions I may have gained, or may attain, are His, and shall be His *alone*; the talents I may possess belong to Him, and He shall have them *wholly* consecrated to Him; the passions and best emotions of my soul are His, and all their warmth, power, and elevation shall be enkindled and displayed in His service; any property I may command shall be freely tendered to my Saviour; any influence I can exert shall be exercised for the honour of my Saviour; and all the opportunities with which I may be favoured of doing good, shall be embraced, and unceasingly improved, for the advancement of the glory of my Saviour. I must and will honour that Redeemer, who has instituted the Gospel ministry, in order that ‘His enemies may be clothed with shame, and that upon himself His crown [may flourish.]’—(Psal. cxxxii. 18.) I will endeavour to promote the glory of that compassionate Saviour, who has hitherto remembered me in mercy—and who is ‘counting me faithful,’ and who will, I trust, ‘put me into the ministry.’ And, should He introduce me to his church, as one of His called and devoted servants, my object shall be to speak of Him—to unfold His beauty—to delineate His character—to describe His work—to portray His sufferings—to exhibit the design and efficacy of His death—to dilate on the wonders of His love—to descant on

His unsearchable and inconceivable riches—to present before the people the fulness and glory of His salvation. This will be my business; this I shall regard as the supreme object which I have to accomplish; the grand reason for which I live; and, in endeavouring to execute which, I can look forward to death and eternity with composure and joy. My divine Saviour has ‘loved me with an everlasting love’—He has the supreme and unbounded claim on my attention and service—on all that I can do for Him, and His cause. It will be but little at the utmost. It will fall infinitely below what I owe Him. It will be a most insignificant return of love. Still, Christ Jesus, my Lord, shall have all I may be able to accomplish. I will live and labour—I will endure difficulty and suffering—that I may glorify Him on the earth; and I hope my feeble efforts to advance His honour will not be utterly in vain. His service to me is honourable and delightful—none can at all compare with it; and the recompence which He bestows on his faithful and devoted servants is glorious and immortal—as far beyond their conception as their deserts.”

These will be the sentiments, the deliberate and warmly-expressed sentiments, of every young man who is thoroughly devoted to Christ and his cause, with the holy ministry in prospect. These will be some of the greatest, the sublimest considerations impelling and controlling his mind, and taking possession of all his faculties.

So that distinguished minister and missionary to China, Robert Morrison, felt. On the 10th of January, 1803, the third day after his admission to Hoxton Academy, he thus gives expression to his devout wishes and solicitudes:—“O God, my Saviour, if I should *ever venture*—if ever I should be honoured to open my mouth to speak forth thine ‘unsearchable riches,’ make me to know and apprehend thy worth, in some measure. And, oh! may I be able to show to my poor fellow-sinners those things which thou mayest be pleased to show unto me. O, enkindle within me an ardent

love of souls! Enable me to do all things for the elect's sakes, that they may also obtain the salvation which is in Christ Jesus, with eternal glory."*

It was Morrison's "own deliberate conviction that his destination to China was in answer to prayer, for his *express* desire was, that God would station him in that part of the missionary field where *the difficulties were the greatest*, and, to all human appearance, *insurmountable*. In this appointment he most cordially acquiesced, and from that time, until the day of his death, he had but one ruling object—the *conversion of China to the faith of Jesus*. *Everything* he thought, and said, and did, henceforward tended, directly or indirectly, to the same end, and to this every personal gratification and advantage was cheerfully subordinated." Entering, therefore, on the missionary field to glorify Christ, he realised a signal blessing. The Saviour was honoured, and his called and chosen servant was honoured in return.

Candidates for the ministry, see that the glory of Christ Jesus is your supreme desire, in coming forward. If it be not, you had better occupy any station than one in "the vineyard of the Lord." It will be a perpetual burden. It will be the source of unceasing vexation and trial. It will be a curse rather than a blessing. If, however, your only desire to enter the holy ministry be to glorify the Lamb of God, and you be admitted to the ministry under the influence of that desire, you will commence your labours, "not in word only, but with power"—you will be "endued with power from on high." There will be "an unction from the Holy One" shed upon your souls. There will be a celestial energy connected with your public ministrations. There will be a continual panting after the honour of Christ, and the salvation of dying men. There will be untiring activity, boldness, and fervour. There will be the increasing development of holy zeal—zeal ever fed by that love which was dis-

* Vide Morrison's Life, by Kidd, vol. i., pp. 33, 34, 50, 51. A striking portraiture of a devoted minister.

played in Gethsemane and on Calvary. There will be a singleness of purpose—a sincerity of aim—a decisiveness of effort—which will demonstrate that the censer has been kindled, that the lamp has been lighted, at the altar of Heaven, and which will powerfully commend those in whose hearts these pure and glowing affections live and reign, “to every man’s conscience as in the sight of God.” Was not the glory of Christ the paramount consideration inducing Baxter and Flavel to enter the ministry? Did not the honour of the Saviour prompt the sainted Henries to think of the sacred office? Was not the supreme desire of Doddridge and Watts, with the ministry in view, the glory of the Lamb? Did not the same solicitude urge Brainerd and Martyn—Payson and Whitfield—and, indeed, every holy candidate—to contemplate the sacred work? And you must think and feel with them. You must cherish the same solitudes—propose the same aim—prefer the same prayer—that Christ Jesus may be magnified in your body, whether by life or death.—(Phil. i. 20.)

We have now endeavoured to unfold what should be your prominent motives for entering the Christian ministry. We have done it with explicitness, seriousness, and fervour, from a sincere desire to direct you aright, and to prevent your being led astray by any unscriptural or erroneous sentiments. We now deliberately ask you, candidates for the Christian ministry, as in the presence of Him who will shortly be your Judge, are the motives above specified your impelling, your absorbing considerations? They should, unquestionably, be your governing thoughts, with the sacred office before you. With the deepest solemnity we inquire “*are they yours?*” Do they regulate—possess—control—*your* minds? In forming your plans, in deciding on your measures, in anticipating an entrance on your regular studies, are these considerations ever present with you—dictating all your prayers—and governing your every movement? They surely will be, if

you are looking forward to the ministry under the influence of those sentiments which the Word of God everywhere sanctions, and which the Saviour, by his own Spirit, invariably induces.

After all your thoughts, however correct, all your feelings, however pure and elevated, you will find considerable mixture of motives. There will be many deficiencies to supply—many errors to correct—much dross to remove. Regard to yourselves will often be discovered; worldly views will frequently operate; vanity, and something akin to pride, will have to be checked; and many inferior and undesirable considerations and objects will present themselves, intruding on the mind, exciting and dividing your attention. While “in the body,” you will always have to deplore imperfection in motive, design, and conduct. In your best employments and your best seasons there will ever be some defects, whose existence you regret—some evils, over whose development you mourn. Still, with all your deficiencies, let it be obvious, palpable to all, that *you are sincere*.

Let your motives be transparent—be broadly and decisively unfolded. Let there be no mistake with regard to your reasons for entering the ministry; nothing with which to reproach yourselves, as to the great principles by which you are governed; nothing in relation to your object which will damage your reputation, or impair your usefulness. Let it be your unceasing prayer that, in this respect especially, you may “have a conscience void of offence, both towards God and man,”—(Acts xxiv. 16);—and that, when you enter on the sacred office, “your eye may be single” to the Divine glory—your aims purely scriptural, benevolent, and holy—and that you may steadily abound, with the most glorious objects in view, in the work of the Lord—acquiescing in his will—consulting his Word—and supremely desiring that his honour may be subserved.

We would entreat you to inquire, most seriously, respecting your *sincerity*—your integrity before God, with all the

duties, responsibilities, solitudes, and trials of the ministry in prospect.

Inquire respecting your *piety and devotedness to Christ*—the holiness of your thoughts and affections—your decisive superiority of mind to the world—the affectionateness and entireness of your consecration to the Redeemer.

Inquire respecting your *intellectual qualifications* for the work. See that they are those which every candidate, in a greater or less degree, ought to possess; and remember, if God call you to labour for him, he will furnish you with all desirable and necessary endowments.

Inquire respecting your *compassion for souls*. Ascertain if it be your predominant feeling—if it be enlightened—pure—ardent—melting. Be assured of this, if you feel correctly, compassion for lost souls will almost *overpower* you.

Inquire respecting your *full satisfaction* that the Lord Jesus has designed you for the work of the ministry, and that he is bringing you into it gradually, but wisely and effectually, and that a special blessing will result from your introduction.

As men of God, as holy and enlightened candidates, you ponder these things. You “lay them in your hearts.” You make them the subjects of daily and unceasing prayer. You cannot rest till you come to a conclusion.

At length, *your decision is formed*. Your minds are fixed. Your purpose is settled. Your solemn resolve is to enter the ministry. You believe that the Lord himself has sent you into his vineyard.

Be fully satisfied, we conjure you, that the decision at which you have arrived is just—enlightened—scriptural. Be fully convinced, without self-partiality, or an undue regard for the opinions and wishes of others, that the Holy Spirit has prompted the conclusion. Be as certain as you can be in relation to any circumstance, that Christ Jesus

himself has been controlling your minds, and directing your steps. You will find this conviction, in after-life, of *infinite importance*.

As the result of long and profound meditation—continued self-examination—fervid, yet submissive, prayer—you consider that your motives for entering the ministry are correct—that God is leading and commanding you to labour for Him. Then, go forward! Hesitate not! Slack not in any of your arrangements or operations! Advance, leaning implicitly on the Saviour—confiding in that power which can never fail—in that love which can never change—in that fidelity which can never be broken—in that goodness which can never be exhausted.

Never repent of your choice.—Whatever the occasional darkness of your sky, or bitterness of your cup; whatever the arduousness of your duties—the intensity of your anxieties—the power or painfulness of your temptations—do not regret the determination which you have formed, to be devoted to the Lord, in connexion with the public service of the sanctuary.

Never be ashamed of your work.—No employment is so great—so momentous—so glorious. It cannot be magnified too much. It cannot be prepared for too vigorously. It cannot be delighted in too earnestly. It would dignify an angel to discharge its duties—to abound in its service—to aim at the accomplishment of its objects—to realise its rewards.

Remember that you are putting on the harness, and you must never have the slightest wish to put it off, until God remove it. You are grasping the sword of the Lord, you must always wield it, and with it fight the battle of truth and holiness, against all error and sin. Your hand is on the plough, in the field of ministerial labour; let it *always* remain there. *You dare not look back.* You are entering the vineyard to work: remember that you must never be unemployed. There will always be much to excite your

attention—to awaken your energies. You are ever to plan, and ever to labour.

Seek, then, to please and honour your Lord, until the hour of death—the hour when he will call you to enter your rest—to receive your immortal recompence—to wear your starry crown!

“ O happy servant he,
 In such a posture found,
 He shall his Lord with rapture see,
 And be with honour crowned ! ”

CHAPTER VI.

COUNSELS TO THE STUDENT FOR THE MINISTRY.

IN offering the subjoined counsels we would, by no means, dogmatise—indulge a harsh, dictatorial, supercilious tone. We would breathe a spirit perfectly dissimilar. We would express every sentiment with decision, still, with the utmost kindness. We value the rising ministry, and appreciate its excellence and superiority. We regard truly devoted aspirants to the ministerial office with emotions of blended respect, anxiety, and affection. We rejoice in their intellectual and religious progress. We hail, with gratitude and undissembled pleasure, their advancement in whatever is calculated to benefit them—enlarge the church—glorify the Saviour; and, therefore, under the influence of the deepest and tenderest solicitude for their usefulness, happiness, and true elevation, we submit to them the following counsels, in the spirit, it is hoped, of intelligence, Christian wisdom, and love. Receive them, so far as you consider the principles to be sound—the admonitions to be enlightened—and the results of compliance to be valuable and permanently beneficial.

We would distribute this chapter into three sections, embracing advice on your studies—your habits and manners—your piety.

SECTION I.

COUNSELS ON YOUR STUDIES.

1. Remember, that, in entering college, *your business is to study.*

You go there to labour, not to trifle. To employ your

mind, to task your faculties, and not to indulge habits of mental indolence and dissipation. You have to collect valuable knowledge from *all* quarters, and that cannot be collected without close and regular application. You have to learn how to think, and compare, and reason, with clearness, precision, and power, and that art is not acquired without much labour. You will have the amplest materials for thought and analysis furnished you, and those materials must be wisely and effectively employed—and can this be done without judicious and unremitting effort? Your intellect is to be developed—its specific and marked character is to be brought out—the various faculties of the mind are to be enlarged, disciplined, and properly balanced. And can these important effects be produced, without well-directed and unwearied exertion? Impossible!

In entering, then, on academic life, remember the name you bear—a *student*. A person of intellectual and studious habits—one who is continually putting valuable knowledge into his mind—enriching and invigorating all his faculties: and let the appellation be employed in reference to you with *strict propriety*. Let it be seriously considered, when you enter the college, where you are to remain during four or five years of the most interesting and important period of your life, that *there* you are *to work*—work voluntarily—work regularly—work vigorously—work *to purpose*—that *there* you are to be always diversifying, or renewing, your mental labour.

The life of a student for the Christian ministry, if he think and feel aright, is no mere play—no idle pastime. It is intelligent, vigorous, untiring effort—effort which must be made from principle—from a fervent desire to expand and strengthen the mind—to exemplify the character which should be unfolded—to breathe the spirit which is appropriate—to make decisive and steady advances—to be prepared for usefulness—to promote the honour of the Saviour. No person is more unworthy—is more disesteemed by the

intelligent, the active, the devout, than a lazy, slothful student for the Christian ministry. One who fritters away his time—who is without plan—without energy—without any earnest desire for solid improvement. Let not this character be borne by you! Let not this stigma apply to you! When you commence your academic career, you *pledge* yourself to study—to labour—to have the mind well and vigorously employed. Let that pledge never be forgotten. Let it be amply redeemed.

2. *Learn to live alone.*

This was the advice which Paley was accustomed to address to his pupils at Cambridge, and to the young clergy of the diocese of Carlisle. “The habit I would recommend, as the *foundation* of almost all the good ones, is *retirement*. Were I required to comprise my advice to young clergymen (and to all students for the ministry the same remark will apply) in *one* sentence, it should be this—Learn to live alone. Half of your faults originate from the want of this faculty.”

Is there any direction to a candidate for the Christian ministry more valuable—more necessary to be observed than this? Can there be any self-respect without it? Can there be any acquisition of human or Divine knowledge without it? Can there be any progress made in sharpening and disciplining the faculties without it? Can there be any estimation of the wise and good without it? In a word, can there be any intellectual or moral excellence developed without it?

Nothing, we are persuaded, is more unfavourable to advancement in study, and, indeed, more opposed to it, than a strong disposition for society, and especially in a student for the ministry. Where there is excessive taste for social intercourse it is evidently implied that mental habits prevail, decidedly inconsistent with superior attainments in literature, science, or any department of study. A candidate for the ministry must sedulously watch against this

snare. There is nothing which he ought to be more anxious to suppress than this feeling. He must endeavour to check, and even eradicate, this hankering after society—this disposition for the seductions of social intercourse, though that intercourse might be the most interesting and attractive. If it become a passion with him while at college, it will not only be a serious detriment to him during his residence there, but an injury to him through the whole of life.

How much time is lost by a student which can never be recovered! How many precious opportunities of intellectual improvement are neglected, and thrown away, which can never again be secured! A student for the ministry has little time for visiting, and he should consider this. He is expected to *study*, not to visit; and he must, on principle, refuse many an invitation to enjoy social intercourse during a long and interesting evening, simply because he has engagements to discharge, and studies to prosecute, which will require his close and unceasing attention in retirement. Without a disposition to live alone, that the advantages of college life may be realised—that the labours of college life may be performed—that the discipline of college life may be maintained—and that those acquirements may be gained which will be of unspeakable importance when the college is left—a young man will be worth *very little* as a minister and pastor. We have never heard of a student attaining any high position, either as a literary man or a divine, without being passionately fond of retirement. Besides, how desirable is it for a student to *look forward*, and to cultivate those habits which will be necessary throughout the whole of life! Many an excellent young man may be stationed in a quiet and rural neighbourhood—in some comparatively sequestered spot, where there is little or no educated society. If he has not formed the habit of living alone, how unhappy and even melancholy will he be; but if he is fond of retirement, if attached and devoted to study, such quietude he will love—such opportunities for mental and

moral culture he will highly value. He will always have a solace. His mind will always be recreated. He will always enjoy the best company—he will have perpetual intercourse with the mighty dead. He will have a fountain of consolation in his own studious retreat—an unceasing source of instruction and improvement there.

3. Be sensible that your college advantages are very great.

You have entered, or are about entering, a building which is devoted to study—dedicated to purposes of inquiry and contemplation. There is something in the situation and very aspect of the edifice which breathes of retirement. It is placed at a distance from the crowd, from “the noisy haunts of men.” You have every facility afforded you for making progress. One impediment and another you have, in Divine providence, removed out of your way. If you do not acquire knowledge—make advances—reap improvement—the fault, remember, will be *your own*, and your own *exclusively*. Pecuniary and secular solicitudes are, to a great extent, suppressed. You have nothing to do with the world. Your business is simply to enrich and discipline your mind, and to prepare for your sacred calling. You have an ample and well-selected college library, to which you have unlimited access, and which you will find to be an invaluable treasure. You have your regular examinations on classical, philosophical, and theological subjects—and which you may prosecute most extensively. You have able, enlightened, and superior professors in their various departments, who by their conversation, advice, and prelections, are pouring a stream of light into your mind. You have continual intercourse with your fellow-students, many of whom are young men of fine acquirements—of powerful and original minds. You have many hours *daily* for self-culture and improvement—hours which you cannot too sacredly regard.

It is apparent, then, that your advantages are very great—very superior; and, sure we are, they cannot be too highly estimated. Improve them unceasingly, and by the spontaneous consecration of all your energies. You will never—we would remind every student for the ministry at college—have such leisure as you *have now*—such seasons of long, profound, unbroken retirement—such opportunities of pursuing an extended range of interesting, and, indeed, invaluable intellectual, ethical, and theological investigations, as are now furnished. When you come to be settled in the ministry, your time will not be your own. Your interruptions will be frequent and necessary. Your public duties will be numerous, and connected with much solicitude. You will often find it difficult to prosecute extended trains of thought and inquiry. A minister and pastor, especially in a populous neighbourhood, and with a large and increasing church and congregation, finds plenty of occupation. His hands are full. His mind is harassed and jaded, as well as his body, by the variety and incessant return of his engagements; and, if he be a man of active habits, and of popular talent, he is nearly always in request. Every student, therefore, should regard the term of college life as one of the happiest and most tranquil parts of his existence.

4. In pursuing your studies, *do not be dependant on others.*

This is a *wretched* habit. It ruins the mind, and ruins the character. If you wish the intellect to be dwarfed and stunted, then rely on others. If you wish effectually to damage your reputation as a candidate for the ministry, then rely on others. It is a habit, too, as degrading as wretched. It evinces that there is no self-respect. It proclaims loudly that there is no exertion—no desire to awaken and put forth your own energies—no solicitude to draw out your own mind, and to elicit and augment your own resources. If you would wish your intellectual character to

be debased, and that *for ever*, you cannot adopt a more effectual plan than to be relying on others.

It is, however, a habit into which many young men, preparing for the ministry, fall; and from which they rarely, if ever, recover. It continues with them throughout life. There is no *self-reliance*—no tasking of themselves—no energetic effort to develop their powers. They never *gauge* their own minds, and, in consequence, they never rise to eminence; indeed, they always occupy a low position. They are materially, irreparably injured. And how can it be otherwise?

We would earnestly request you, students for the ministry, to *think for yourselves*. Put forth your own minds. Let your understandings develop their characteristic feature, their force, clearness, or comprehensiveness, with regard to every subject. Let your judgments be brought to bear on every topic of investigation. Let all your intellectual faculties be awakened, whatever the exercises in which you engage—whatever the positions, or principles, which you are required to examine and discuss.

Be determined, with the ministry before you, to *labour for yourselves*. Let mental decision—boldness and independence of thought—be discovered. There is no originality without these qualities. There can be no high station without their development. Throw away every crutch. Endeavour to stand, or move forward, without support. Do not rely on any—that is, do not *form the habit*. There are periods in your academic life when *occasional* inquiries will be necessary—when *occasional* help will be most beneficial—still, let the golden rule be, with *all* students, “We think—we work for ourselves. We wish our own understandings to be exercised—our own judgments to be made to bear on any subjects of thought and investigation submitted to us—our own powers to be elicited.” By adhering to this maxim, you will, in every case, test the mind—bring out its strength—ascertain its resources—increase its treasures.

We have known some students for the ministry who have had no self-reliance—who have never thought or inquired for themselves. They have been always dependant on others. For their classical or mathematical exercises they have uniformly repaired to some of their fellow-students for direction, which they might, by a little inquiry and effort have gained themselves—and with tenfold more personal benefit. For their philosophical and theological essays they have consulted one work and another, without deliberately tasking their own minds, and endeavouring to produce something original and respectable, instead of acting in this unworthy and disreputable manner. For their discourses they have invariably sought *foreign* help. They have gone to one sermon writer and another, gaining a thought from the first—an image from the second—an illustration from the third—an appeal from the fourth—and thus they have always appeared in borrowed plumes. Their sermons have been a collection of patches—a motley group of passages and paragraphs from one author and another, instead of being a chain of original and consecutive thoughts and reasonings—instead of being the fruits of personal reflection, examination of the Scriptures, and much prayer.

What have *such* students been worth in subsequent life? What has marked their career? Where has been their weight—their progress—their efficiency? What have they done as ministers? What has been their position? What their usefulness? What their power? It must be regarded by every student for the ministry as an indisputable fact, that he will never be esteemed, or respected, unless his own mind be exercised—be awakened in a bold, vigorous, and independent manner. “If you cannot stand on your own feet, do not borrow crutches which will be taken from you soon, and which will effectually prevent you from ever having strength to walk alone.”

5. Let your studies *be systematically pursued*.

You will accomplish very little, while at college, or after your removal from it, without this. It is an arrangement which is indispensable to your respectability—your progress—your efficiency. Have your plan of study. Let it be drawn out with care. Let it be judicious, enlightened, wisely and maturely formed, and do not deviate from it, without an ample reason. Have your time well distributed. Have your specific hours for one branch of study and another, and adhere to the arrangement as closely and regularly as possible. You will find it of unspeakable utility. Many students for the ministry do all by fits and starts—from mere impulse—from the thought or purpose of the moment. There is no wise plan sketched out—no broad foundation laid. Nothing is clearly and judiciously defined. They have no arrangement whatever, and we know what is the result. All is uncertainty—all is hurry—all is confusion; and, in consequence of the want of regulation—of system, their progress is, by no means, so decisive, and the good opinion formed respecting them is, by no means, so marked as, with their abilities, they might have secured.

How many students fritter away their time, and injure their minds, because they are without any plan! They read by impulse. They think by impulse. They labour by impulse. So that they can just get up their college exercises, and “go through the house” respectably, they are satisfied. We hope *you* will never be so easily satisfied. We hope you will never act in this slovenly, injudicious, and improper manner. Remember, you must, during your academic career, make the most of your time—the most of your mind,—and prepare yourselves most vigorously and efficiently for future life. And how can you do this, unless you act from system—under the direction of an enlightened and well-arranged plan?

This is an advice which we would urge on you, as being one of pre-eminent importance to your personal respectability

—your intellectual progress and elevation—your ministerial usefulness. In all your reading, and course of study, carry out an intelligent and matured system. You will do as much again—acquire as much again. Not that we wish to impose an undue weight on you, which would prevent the elasticity and free play of your movements; not that we would throw any fetters around you, which would effectually check the bold and unrestricted development of your energies; not that we would have the same plan for *every* student in our colleges;—quite the reverse. We are anxious that all should be done under the influence of judgment and principle. Still, let each student in our divinity halls form a wise plan, and not depart from it, unless necessitated. Never approve a loose and indeterminate mode of study, without precision, or arrangement, or aim. Lay down certain great principles, and let them be vigorously carried out, according to your age, standing, and what may be expected from you. You will find that system in study will allow you ample time for acquiring knowledge, and exerting your powers; and, in the course of years, you will be surprised to perceive, by the arrangement which you have adopted, what an amount of information you have gained, and what advances you have made.

Besides, you will be prepared for future life. The habit will continue with you. You will maintain it during the period of your pastorate. Everything will be done in a regular, systematic, business-like way; and while the student, or minister, without plan, without precision, without system, is always in a state of uncertainty, and frequently of confusion, and accomplishing little, the wisdom and beauty of your procedure will be apparent—the respectability of your mental character will be developed—and you will be sensible, in after-life, that the advantages you have realised, in consequence of such arrangements, have not only been great, but invaluable.

6. Do not be discouraged by difficulties, but regard the object *and end of all your studies*.

This is advice which you will have frequent occasion to remember—which, indeed, you must never disregard. In entering college, to study closely, to labour vigorously, and sedulously to prepare for the multiform and anxious engagements of the pastorate, you will necessarily have many difficulties often presenting themselves, and they will be painfully felt by you. The career of a student for the ministry, and, especially, of one who is desirous of being fitted, in the *best* manner, for his great undertaking, is, obviously, inseparable from much and intense solicitude. The change, from an active to a confined and sedentary life, is very great, and, for a time, is sensibly felt. He will find it difficult, perhaps for a considerable period, to bring his mind into a state of preparedness for his novel and various engagements at college. And, as he advances in his academic career, he will realise that much intellectual effort is essential, and that many, and often trying difficulties, in connexion with his mental exercises, are to be encountered. His mind must be awakened as, perchance, it has never been awakened before. Subjects of thought and investigation will have to be carefully examined, on which, probably, he had never previously dwelt. Problems will have to be solved, which will stretch his mind to the utmost. Trains of illustration and reasoning will be necessary, to which he had not, prior to his entrance on college life, accustomed himself. Classical, philosophical, and divinity lectures will have to be filled up, with precision and comprehensiveness. Specimens of composition will have to be furnished, which will, at once, elicit and task his powers of thinking and expression. A large number of profound works, in several languages, will have to be daily consulted, and many of them most closely examined. The student will be brought into contact, continually, with a number of intelligent and gifted young men, some of whom develop choice faculties, and, therefore, while

■ sense of his own deficiency will be powerfully felt, there will be an earnest desire awakened not to occupy an inferior position. These will be the circumstances—these will be the difficulties—which every student for the ministry must realise on entering college.

Education—study—be it remembered, under any circumstances, if worthy of the name, must be associated with labour, with difficulty. It has been remarked, most philosophically, that “a system of education which presents no difficulties is *not a training* system. It is a system of humouring, not of counteracting, lazy and ungenerous propensities.” As boys are trained, so will they be men. As students are trained, so will they be ministers and pastors. College life must be not a life of play, but of labour. Those means must be employed—those rules framed—those exercises pursued—that intellectual discipline maintained—by which the minds of students will be induced and invigorated—their inquiries be directed—their character be formed—their habits of thought, investigation, comparison, diligence, and accuracy be cultivated, which will be of incalculable value to them, at every subsequent stage of existence.

Whatever difficulties, then, students for the Christian ministry, you meet with in your studies, in any of your intellectual pursuits, do not be discouraged. *Be determined to conquer them, and you will conquer them.* Apply your minds vigorously to the work, and one problem and another will be solved—one source of anxiety and another will be removed. A resolute application of the mind to study—a determination to *grapple* with *every* subject, however, at first, perplexing and uninviting it may appear, will enable you to achieve the victory. Nothing *great* is to be accomplished without difficulty. And when you contemplate the object and end of all your studies, however complicated and laborious, you should be ready to perform *any* task—to meet *any* difficulty—so that you may be efficiently prepared for your great undertaking.

When Burckhardt, the celebrated traveller, offered his services as an explorer to the Association for promoting the discovery of the interior parts of Africa, a strong representation was made to him of the dangers of the service. His resolution, however, remaining unshaken, his offer was gladly accepted. He then prepared himself, both mentally and physically, for his *employment*. He studied Arabic—chemistry—astronomy—mineralogy—medicine—and surgery. He took long journeys *bare-headed in the sun*. He slept on *the ground*, and lived on *vegetables and water*. Thus he was willing to endure difficulty and hardship, because he was anxious to be prepared for his arduous mission, and to be successful in it. So you, if you would do anything throughout life, must not be afraid of difficulty in your studies. You must expect this, prepare for it, and be determined, by the Divine aid, to vanquish all. Dwell on the memorable words of Elliot, the apostle of the American Indians, when he had finished his Grammar of their uncouth and most difficult language:—"Prayer and pains, through faith in Jesus Christ, *will do anything*." Have that striking sentence engraven on your memory—it will effect wonders.

7. Form the habit of analysis.

We would address this counsel to students for the ministry, in the most emphatic and earnest manner. The habit recommended is one of the most valuable which those who are pursuing studies for the sacred office can possibly cultivate. With regard to the acquisition of knowledge, and the benefit of the intellectual powers generally, it will be found to be inestimable. In the education of youth, one of the grand objects of the well-qualified preceptor is to instruct them in the habit of analysis and arrangement, in the investigation of subjects presented before them. This fixes the attention—concentrates the faculties—gives clearness and comprehension to the views—and is of lasting moment to the mind.

We would say to all students for the ministry, who wish to be efficient, either at college, or when they sustain the pastoral character—form, and steadily pursue, the habit of analysis. Have a thesis on which to frame a skeleton. Compare your analysis, or skeleton, with the thesis and outline of some distinguished man on the same subject. By adopting such a plan, a number of important subjects will not only be comprehended by you, but will be luminously unfolded. You will understand them, and penetrate them, as you never did before. The habit of thought will be greatly facilitated, the power of retention will be materially increased, and additional vigour will be given to *all* the intellectual faculties.

It is mentioned in the life of Le Sage, that having been led, by the shortness of his memory, to look out for some more productive quality in his own mind, after trying various means of acquiring and retaining knowledge, he found none so beneficial as that of reducing every subject to a clear and short analysis, or system, drawing it out upon paper, depositing it in a pigeon-hole of his bureau, and, at given intervals, looking over the various digests so prepared. At his death, *many hundreds* of such digests were found in the secret drawers of his cabinet. Isaac Watts, and many distinguished men to whom we might refer, adopted a similar plan. We would earnestly recommend every student to pursue the same arrangement. It will aid the memory surprisingly. It will induce early and fixed habits of clear, close, and patient thought. Always, then, have a subject before you. Let the mind dwell on that subject—dissect it—view it in all its parts, bearings, and results. In the course of years, many hundred subjects, of the utmost importance in literature, philosophy, morals, and religion, may thus be tested by the mind—be carefully examined by it—reduced to analysis; and it will be found, in consequence, that the views will obtain an expansion, a luminousness, a vigour, a depth, with regard to the subjects thus searchingly investi-

gated, which they could never otherwise have gained. Having realised, for many years, the advantage of this habit up to the present hour, we would recommend it, *most warmly*, to every literary and theological student.

8. Pay marked attention to the study of *mental philosophy, and the mathematics*.

No enlightened student will neglect or undervalue these branches of study. He will appreciate them most highly. They most effectually discipline the mind of a candidate for the ministry, and enable him to discriminate and compare with intelligence and accuracy—to reason with closeness and precision. We consider that no science is more important, to one looking forward to the ministry, than that which is ordinarily termed *metaphysical*—the science of mind—a knowledge of the *springs* of human action. It is much to be regretted that this science is neglected by many young men, or pursued with no closeness—examined with no depth. We are increasingly convinced, that every student wishing to be a discriminating preacher, and an able, accurate, profound divine, should be familiar with the science of mind. The counsellor, or judge, is required to be well acquainted with law and jurisprudence—the officer must be familiar with military tactics—the physician must be thoroughly conversant with medicine;—and ought not the student for the Christian ministry to be profoundly acquainted with the powers, the laws, the workings of the human mind? It is, indeed, difficult to conceive to what an extent the usefulness of sermons is often impaired, and their power diminished, by ignorance of the laws and operations of mind.

It has been ably remarked, that “nothing in Scripture itself is more apt to touch and affect the heart, than what has been termed its ‘power of divination;’ or, in other words, that perspicacity by which it exhibits what is in the heart of the hearer, and reveals the man to himself. And an intimate acquaintance with the powers, habits, and workings

of the mind would, to a certain extent, supply the preacher with a talisman of the same kind. We should stand before him convicted, rebuked, and condemned; and often, under the influence of the Holy Spirit, who delights to work by rational means on rational creatures, should be led to exclaim, that ‘God was with him of a truth!’ ”

Students for the ministry, cultivate enlarged acquaintance with mental philosophy. It will be of *essential* advantage to you. It will give a clearness and discriminateness to your thoughts—a vigour to your intellectual powers—a precision, simplicity, and perspicuity to your style—a soundness and force to your reasonings—which you will find to be of immense importance.

The study of *the mathematics* is, also, of *incalculable* value to candidates for the ministry. We are persuaded that, in an intellectual respect, this study can scarcely be estimated too highly, by a young man anxious to be well prepared for the sacred office. It will fix and absorb his attention. It will give clearness and force to his understanding. It will preserve him from mental rashness and error, and will prove of unspeakable benefit, in relation to intellectual discipline generally. Many theological students neglect this study, and unwisely depreciate it—most unadvisedly and improperly, they slightly cultivate it, and hence they injure their minds exceedingly. Our best and most vigorous writers, in every department, have been good, and, in very many instances, superior mathematicians. Our men of greatest clearness and strength of mind have been characterised by their attention to mathematical studies, and by their attachment to them.

Some young men will ask the question, “What good will accrue from mathematical studies?” We reply, the good will be *inestimable*. It will be realised in *all* your intellectual engagements, and during the whole of life. The mind will have a tone, a clearness, a vigour, a closeness and continuity of thought given to it, which it would not develop

were these studies neglected. The very effort which the mathematics require will be most beneficial. How just is the remark of Dr. Thomas Brown! "In the discipline of reason, as in the training of the *athletæ*, it is not for a single victory which it may give to the youthful champion that the combat is to be valued, but for that knitting of the joints, and hardening of the muscles—that quickness of eye, and collectedness of effort, which it is forming for the struggles of more illustrious fields."

We can generally discover when a student for the ministry pursues the study of intellectual philosophy and the mathematics, and when he cultivates these branches of thought and inquiry with vigour and advantage. There is a *marked superiority* about him—in his mind and general character in relation to the ministry, and in comparison with other young men, by whom these studies have been neglected.

It is recorded by his father, that that charming and superior young man, Joshua Rowley Gilpin, when but a youth, went through the "Elements" of Euclid *three or four* times, with indefatigable industry, and with still increasing desire; nor was he at all satisfied with himself till he could repeat and apply, in an orderly manner, *all the propositions* contained in the two or three first books of that celebrated work.*

9. Make yourselves *familiar with the classics*.

Previously to entering the best colleges now, it is necessary that you should have acquainted yourselves, to a certain extent, with some of the purest classical writers, in the Latin and Greek languages; and, upon your entrance on your academic career,* you find that the study of these, and other languages, is vigorously and systematically pursued. Prosecute, then, this class of studies with interest, energy, and a determination to excel. Be not satisfied with "getting

* See "Gilpin's Monument of Parental Affection." A little volume we ever read with increased interest and delight.

up," daily, your allotted classical exercises in a creditable manner, but be resolved that your knowledge of the classics shall be accurate and extensive—that your progress, in this department, shall be decisive and steady. We would counsel you to familiarise yourselves, as much as possible, with the productions of the immortal writers of Greece and Rome. Never regard the study of the classics as being *unimportant*. It will be of the *utmost* advantage to your minds, and will exert the most beneficial influence on *all* your other studies.

We are aware that, in many instances, classical instruction has been too exclusively regarded; but there is no fear of this, in our best and admirably conducted theological institutions at the present period. We are sensible how much there is in the finest of the classics to offend, to grieve, and to annoy, especially, the mind of a real Christian. We lament the heathen mythology which is placed so vividly before us; we deplore the pictures of war, and the warlike spirit, so graphically sketched; we mourn over the superstition, profanity, and indelicacy by which the most distinguished productions of the ancient classics are marked. Still, it is necessary that these studies be not neglected; it is necessary that you should be familiar with the finest compositions of Greece and Rome, in order that the treasures of ancient learning and genius may be unfolded to you, and that a key may be put into your hands, by which you will be able to open one door after another, in pursuing important investigations, with the Christian ministry before you.

What can be finer than many of the Latin classics? The fulness and eloquence of Cicero—the ease, nice observation, and exquisite facility of Horace—the brevity, force, and philosophic sageness of Tacitus—the discrimination and wisdom of Quintilian—the copiousness and majestic flow of Livy—the inimitable elegance and beauty of Virgil? One kind of excellence developed by the Roman authors is surpassing:—an exquisite skill in the use of language; a happy selection of terms; a nice and elegant structure of phrase;

a transparency of style; a precision by which they convey the strongest sentiments in the most direct form; indeed, everything which relates to the most admirable polish of manner. The study of the Latin classics has peculiar recommendation as “a praxis in the habits of investigation and analysis.” The terms employed go through an unusual number of variations and inflections. These inflections are, perhaps, more philosophically appropriated, and more distinct in their meaning, than the inflections of any other ancient language.

The *philosophy* of language is efficiently acquired by studying this language. Practice is superior to theory, and we are persuaded that acquaintance with the principles of language, their signification, beauty, and force, will be more successfully gained, and more deeply imprinted on the mind, by the careful examination of Virgil, Tully, and Horace, than by reading a hundred treatises on universal grammar.

How requisite is it, also, that students for the ministry should be conversant with the purest and finest Grecian authors! How necessary that they should be well read in Homer and Xenophon—in Plato and Demosthenes—in Æschylus, Euripides, and Sophocles. There will be the purest and most beautiful language laid open to them—with whose elegance, richness, and mellifluousness they will be charmed. The treasures of literature and exalted genius will be poured into their minds, and, by the careful investigation of the Grecian classics, their own intellect will be materially benefited. Difficulties will be conquered of no trifling order, and the achievement will be of essential advantage to them throughout life.

Still, while we thus address students for the ministry, and say, be familiar with the ancient classics, we would *pre-eminently* observe, be sure, *above all*, to be conversant with the *Hebrew Bible* and the *Greek Testament*, and with any works in the Latin or Greek language which will throw

light on *the Word of God*. You have inestimable treasures here—treasures which can never be exhausted. There is nothing, to a theological student, like being conversant with the *original* languages of Scripture, that the precise meaning of terms may be understood; that the full force of expression, images, and passages may be felt; that “the mind of the Spirit” may be perfectly comprehended, and that the understanding may be well prepared, and well furnished, with intelligent confidence, to expound the Word of God; and that the young minister may be qualified, by an examination of the original languages of the Bible, and an appeal to them, to meet the infidel, and to refute the gainsayer.

Theological students, diligently pursue this branch of study! Enter into it with intelligence and deep interest. You will be amply repaid. This familiarity with the original languages of Scripture will be of incalculable importance to you. It will materially enrich the mind. It will aid you in all your other studies. In preparing for the pulpit it will enable you quickly to discern, and lucidly to exhibit, the prominent features of every scriptural subject on which you dwell. You will mark the connexion of your texts; you will give the sense and design of the passage; you will present “the mind of the Spirit” before the people; and it will be seen, without any parade of learning, that you are familiar with the original tongues of Holy Scripture; and thus, weight, variety, and effect of the *best* kind, will be given to your ministry.

Every young minister should strive to excel in understanding the Word of God; and he should remember, that there never was a period, when the facilities afforded in the study of the Bible, and biblical criticism, were more numerous and important than in the present age—and it would be, on his part, most unwarrantable, and even disgraceful, to neglect the facilities and advantages furnished.

10. Be conversant with great original writers in your own language.

While you pay close and assiduous attention to the Grecian and Roman classics, do not forget that there are *British* classics to be regarded also, and you have a large number of these—writers, distinguished for their elegance and beauty—richness and vigour—originality and elevation. And, be assured, you cannot examine them too closely—analyse their productions too carefully—mark their characteristic and commanding excellences too accurately. Your attention will be amply repaid. Your minds will be materially strengthened and enlarged; the understanding, the judgment, the memory, the imagination, will all receive the utmost advantage. Benefits will be conferred on the intellect altogether inestimable. What student can examine Bacon and Locke—Newton and Boyle—Milton and Barrow—Johnson and Burke—without deriving, from the thorough investigation of their writings, *incalculable* instruction and improvement?

Let every student, then, for the ministry, be a *close* and *meditative reader*. Let him fix on a few great and surpassing productions of the distinguished writers of his own country; and let them be perused, and re-perused. Let their thoughts—their reasonings—their images—their illustrations—their terms and phrases, be attentively pondered—revolved in the mind continually—and thus the intellect will be perpetually fed, and a source of the highest pleasure will be commanded.

Have, as accurate and diligent students, your *common-place book*, and let it be *alphabetically* arranged. There have your analyses preserved, and the choicest passages inserted from the compositions of the great intellectual masters. Enrich it as much as possible. Let it be filled with gems of thought, reasoning, and composition. You will find it very valuable in itself—in the course of years the intellectual treasury will be ample—and the effort it will require will exceedingly strengthen the memory, im-

prove your style, and invigorate and enlarge the mind. While you read, note down any thoughts which may occur to you, in relation to any great subject which you may be investigating, or any superior composition which you may be perusing. Thoughts thus penned will have a freshness, an originality, and often a vigour and beauty about them, which will subsequently much strike you, and you would deeply regret their loss.

Above all, as theological students, be well read in *theology*. This is your *special* business. Let it never be forgotten, or lightly regarded. Let your views of Divine Truth be enlarged, discriminating, profound. On divine subjects, never be superficial, inaccurate, shallow. Carefully investigate *every part* of the sacred oracles, with all the aids you can command, that you may know how to write, how to preach, how to converse;—how to direct and warn sinners—how to edify, encourage, and admonish the people of God—how to present the great principles of revelation before those who may be convened in the sanctuary.

And remember to be *familiar with the great old divines*. If you are not, your intellect, your heart, your future ministry, will sustain *incalculable* loss. There is a richness—a fulness—a theological depth and vigour—and an originality about them, which you will find scarcely anywhere else. They are quaint—abound in circumlocutions—pay little attention to style—are often coarse and vulgar; this, and much more than this, we grant. Still, their excellences, as theologians, are surpassing. We never examine their great productions without being riveted—humbled—powerfully impressed—essentially benefited. They exhaust the topics on which they dwell—they enkindle the most devotional feelings—their range of Scripture truth is perfectly unlimited—their learning is surprising—their theological acumen is profound—and, while they enrich the mind, they always improve the heart.

Peruse, then, again and again, the best treatises of

Jeremy Taylor—the acute and profound theology of Owen—the stirring and impassioned appeals of Baxter—the calm, contemplative, and majestic writings of the seraphic Howe—the chaste and elegant productions of the silver-tongued Bates—the fine contemplations, devotional maxims and thoughts of Bishop Hall—the plain, pious, and striking sermons of Flavel—the deep and masterly dissertations of Charnock—the quaint, but sound and pungent compositions of Bunyan—some of the best specimens of Manton, Goodwin, Sibbes, Preston, Brooks, and many, very many others to whom we might refer. Do not forget the Henries. Examine the discourses of Watts and Doddridge; they have many excellences. And we would particularly recommend to you the works of Robert Trail. They are very plain. There is no polish, no attempt at fine writing, but, for clear views, devotional feeling, and profound acquaintance with the Scriptures, we know few of the divines of former days who were his superiors. While you live, studiously and devoutly read the productions of the great theologians of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries.

11. *Form a good style.*

This is an acquisition of great importance to every student, especially to a candidate for the Christian ministry, and one which should be most sedulously cultivated. It is, however, not an easy attainment. It is the result of much acquaintance with language, good taste, and of familiarity with the best models. Make it your study, your particular study, to *write well*, and to *speak well*. It is most desirable that your style of writing, or speaking, should at once recommend you—that it should be the transparent expression of thought.

Now, to form a good style, the *essential* rule is not to attempt to express yourselves before you thoroughly know your own meaning. When a man perfectly understands himself, appropriate diction will generally be at his com-

mand, either in writing or speaking. In such cases, the thoughts and the words are associated. Thus there will be proper words in proper places.

Precision, too, in the employment of terms, is indispensable, and "the test is," as has been philosophically observed, "to ascertain whether you can translate the phrase or sentence adequately into simpler terms, regard being had to the feeling of the whole passage." Let this plan be tried on some of the most admirable parts of Milton, Shakespere, Pope, Addison, Dugald Stewart, Robert Hall, and see if you can substitute other words, which are more simple, in any given passage, without a violation of the meaning or tone.

Rely on it, that the remark of a great author is most accurate—"The source of bad writing is the desire to be *something more* than a man of sense; the straining to be thought a genius; and it is just the same in speech-making. If men would only say what they have to say in plain terms, how *much more eloquent* would they be!"

In order, then, that you may form a good style, *write much*. Be diligent in composition. Let no day pass without some effort of this kind being made. Have some subject before you on which to express your thoughts—some essay, in the composition of which you deem it a duty to employ your mind and your pen—some discourse which is written fully out—that you may acquire a freedom, and an increasing facility in giving utterance to your sentiments. This diligence in composition you will find of great importance.

Write with as much care as possible. Let nothing be penned heedlessly—without reflection—without judgment—without accuracy. In all your terms and phrases—all your imagery—all your illustrations—all your reasonings—all your statements or appeals—let it be apparent that nothing is written in a loose, flimsy, careless manner; we want no stiffness, no primness, but enlightened accuracy.

Examine the best authors—to see how they express them-

selves—to mark their use of words—and the clear, beautiful, and impressive manner in which their ideas are conveyed to the mind. It has been strikingly remarked, that “a fine writer meanders through the most beautiful mazes of language, and, after selecting the most appropriate words and phrases, brings every idea forth with captivating simplicity. He portrays with vividness and grace; ideas of reality he depicts in full and just proportions; ideas of abstraction he displays with justness and precision; the modifications of feeling he touches with all the varying, yet harmonious, tints of colouring.”

You will find a careful and discriminating examination of Milton, of Barrow, of Addison, of Burke, of Samuel Johnson, of Leighton, of Paley, of Dugald Stewart, of Alison, and, especially, of Robert Hall, of the greatest importance to you in the formation of a good style. The majesty of one; the clearness and precision of another; the simplicity and exquisite ease of another; the chaste and quiet beauty of another; the elegance and finish of another; the richness, fulness, and vigour of another—will rivet your attention, and, while the mind is deeply interested, it will be essentially benefited.

Uniformly aim, both in writing and speaking, at *three* things,—

Regard *simplicity*.—If this be wanting, nothing will compensate; the main charm is wanting. We, of course, refer to a chaste and elegant simplicity. No parade—no pomposity—no affectation. The finest writers are always the simplest and most unpretending. There is no fustian—no glare. Their compositions are ever the most natural and artless—the most plain; not bald, not coarse, but beautiful and impressive from their *chaste simplicity*. Those who write, or speak, from the fulness of a well-cultivated and well-disciplined mind, are ever characterised by this feature. There is no finery—no tinsel.

Aim at *perspicuity*.—In composition be distinct, luminous.

Let all your terms be accurate ; all your thoughts definite, and definitely expressed ; and all the illustrations or imagery you employ, calculated to convey your sentiments directly and vividly to the mind. Be so clear, both in writing and speaking, as that none can *possibly mistake* you.

Aim at force.—Let not your style be feeble, inane, lifeless—commanding no weight—producing no impression—doing no execution. Let it *tell* on the mind and the heart. Let every sentence, every word, tell. And in order that your compositions may be powerful and effective, they must be *natural*—there must be a manly energy about them. They must convey important sentiments in a direct manner. They must be dictated, not only by the understanding, but by the *heart*. Without these qualities, your compositions will be ineffective. There may be ornament, and considerable effort, but they will be comparatively powerless.

Studiously endeavour, then, to form a good style ; a style without inaccuracy, obscurity, feebleness, or meretricious display. And, remember, it will require marked attention and labour. A careless, slovenly procedure will never avail. It is not an easy thing to become a superior writer, on any subject. It demands great effort and perseverance. The clearness and force, the harmony, and all the niceties of language must be regarded ; the best models must be constantly before the eye ; the purest taste must be cultivated ; simplicity and luminousness of expression must be perpetually aimed at, and all straining, pomposity, and artifice must be carefully avoided. Continually examine the language of the inspired writers—observe the manner in which they express themselves ; their simplicity,—their adherence to truth and nature—their clearness and directness—their boldness and vigour—their majesty and tenderness—their chaste and unrivalled beauty. Make their compositions your *habitual study*, and you will find that your style will receive essential advantage.

12. Ever remember, while pursuing your studies, that *your work is that of the ministry; make all bear on this.*

There is great danger, often, during your residence at college, of forgetting this, or of not regarding it with that seriousness, fervour, and concentration of mind which are so desirable and necessary. While you are attending to one study and another,—examining Homer to-day, Virgil and Livy to-morrow,—Thucydides or Euripides to-day, Tacitus or Lucretius to-morrow,—while you are fixing the mind on the problems of geometry—investigating the intellectual faculties—reading carefully on history, science, and general literature, is there not much necessity for the admonition? Do not forget *the end of all your studies*, that you may be good and efficient preachers, able divines, honourable and successful pastors.

It is always of moment for you to remember, that you may be superior linguists, but sorry theologians; that you may be profoundly read in philosophy, both intellectual and moral—skilful as mathematicians, and yet not be qualified in the *best* sense for your future labours; that you may attain the first eminence for the cultivation of the mind, and yet have little fitness for the great work of directing sinners to the cross—drawing them to the Lord Jesus.

Be continually, therefore, mindful of your great business, as you are prosecuting one interesting and absorbing study after another. Your principal employment, through life, will be to preach the Gospel, to explain the Scriptures, to inculcate and enforce the Truth of God, to lead your fellow-creatures into the light, liberty, and happiness of Christianity. And, that this may be accomplished, let your studies be conducted under *the influence of high Christian principle*. Let the sentiments of the Gospel regulate all; the spirit of the Gospel chasten and govern all; the motives of the Gospel prompt and control you in the prosecution of all. This will impart an elevated character to your studies, of immense importance to you, and which will exert the most powerful influence.

Associate your studies *uniformly with prayer*. Enter on none without prayer; pursue none without prayer; terminate none without prayer. You will find that prayer will bring down light from heaven—afford direction in difficulty—minister support in the hour of weakness and anxiety, and be the instrument, the medium, of conveying to you the most valuable and necessary gifts and blessings. A theological student should be *pre-eminently* marked by his attachment to prayer—by the steadiness, constancy, and delight, with which he abounds in the exercise. While pursuing his studies for the holy ministry, his motto should be, “I give myself unto prayer.” Doddridge was wont to observe, that he never advanced well in human learning without prayer; and that he always made the most proficiency in his studies, when he prayed with the *greatest fervency*.

Let your studies *centre in Christ*. Let Him be the Alpha and Omega. Let Him be the sun in the system, from whom all the rays of light which illumine your minds emanate, and whose beauty and glory you are only anxious to reflect on those around you.

In all your reading, think of Jesus; in all your inquiries, whether intellectual or moral, regard the Lord Jesus; in all your compositions, remember the honour of the Lord Jesus. Whatever the extent of your acquisitions, or the abilities commanded by you, place *all* at the feet of the Lord Jesus, and say, “O Lord, thou hast given all, and all shall be employed for the development of thy Divine beauty and excellence, for the celebration of thy love, for the advancement of thine honour!” This is the way to study well—to study to purpose—so to study as that you, and others, through you, may have a rich and a permanent blessing.

When the Saviour perceives that you make all your acquirements, talents, and energies bear on Him, in order that He may be supremely exalted, you will be sure to be recompensed and honoured by Him in return.

13. In pursuing your studies, attend *specially* to the following directions:—

Rise early.—Guard most vigilantly against sluggish, drowsy, palpably indolent habits. They are as injurious as unseemly and disgraceful. Do not spend your *best* hours in bed. If you accustom yourselves to rise early, and to do so *regularly*, it will soon become to you a positive pleasure,—a pleasure which you will not readily forego. And it is surprising, by the maintenance of this excellent habit, what acquisitions, in a few years, you will make. Besides, your health, by the regular adoption of this plan, will be greatly improved. Elliot, the venerable missionary to the American Indians, deemed the morning no less a friend to the *Graces* than to the *Muses*, and he would admonish students, “I pray, look to it that you be *morning birds*.”

Do not sit up too late.—The habit of remaining up till midnight, or one in the morning, to study, is a most undesirable and pernicious habit. It ruins the sight—it ruins the nervous system—it ruins the constitution. It prevents, when you do retire to rest, after such protracted studies by night, that sleep, which is as necessary for the mind as for the body, and the foundation is laid of future and permanent disorders. How touchingly Baxter deploras his early addictedness to night studies! The testimony and regret of many distinguished ministers and writers correspond with his. Close your studies, if possible, by nine or ten o'clock every evening. You will find that hour quite late enough to be maintained. And better do a little less, than have your health seriously and permanently impaired.

Never read in bed.—It is a practice often adopted by students, but one more dangerous and unwarrantable we can scarcely conceive. It ought *never to be allowed* in any of our colleges. The writer knew a student who went through Hume, Gibbon, Rollin, Hook's Roman History, Mitford's Greece, and all Clarke's Travels, by reading *two hours* nightly, while he was lying on his bed. Of course,

all the numerous inmates of the establishment were, every night, in jeopardy. He also knew a student who narrowly escaped with his life, by indulgence in this bad habit. Had he not been discovered at the moment he was, he must, inevitably, have perished. We would say, most emphatically, to every student, whatever your desire for knowledge, *never read in bed*. You may have your safety candle, shade, or lamp, still there is always great danger; and we cannot too loudly warn you of the peril in which you involve yourself and others.

Do not apply too closely.—Study may be excessive. Labour of the mind may be extreme and most injurious. The bow must not always be kept in a state of tension. The mind, like the body, requires rest, change, recreation. Do not be always exercising the intellectual faculties. Do not entertain the opinion that fourteen hours' study, daily, will not be injurious. We believe that many young men injure themselves materially by excessive application. Their sight is impaired. They labour under head-ache, and confirmed indigestion. Their complexion is pale and sickly. They are never well. We would say to every student, with the utmost earnestness,—*Take daily, regular, active exercise in the open air*. Let the blood freely circulate after protracted sitting. Let the limbs and muscles have full play. Let the mind be *thoroughly unbent*. Go out simply for recreation, and for the maintenance and improvement of health. Regard it as an *incumbent duty* to take daily exercise, for *one hour at least*, and generally before you dine. When unfavourable weather prevents you taking exercise in the open air, have some kind of exercise in the house. It is essential to your daily health, comfort, and progress. If you do not form this habit, you will regret it for life, and your days will be shortened. Besides, you will resume your studies as vigorously and as buoyantly again. The mind will be fresh, the body will have new life, and you will be able to concentrate the attention with

readiness and pleasure. Let *nothing*, then, prevent you, when in health, from taking vigorous and daily exercise. Read the admirable memoir of President Dwight, to learn the advantages of active exercise regularly maintained. Few students dwell sufficiently on the importance of this.

See that you leave college *thoroughly acquainted with the Bible*.—That is *the one book* which you are to study. The Bible is to be *your classic*. You are to be continually examining it—marking its terms—pondering its statements—analysing its principles—observing its spirit—dwelling on its surpassing and Divine excellences. You will find the Scripture to be an inexhaustible mine. The more you work it, the richer it will grow. The deeper you descend, the more will your wonder and admiration be awakened. Remember that you must read the Word of God more frequently than any, or all other books. You must pause over it, and pray over it, as verse by verse are examined. You must compare one part with another. You must profoundly contemplate it,—digest it,—get it into your minds, till you feel that you are largely and accurately acquainted with it—that you are powerfully under its influence—and that the Spirit who indited it has filled you with the spirit of knowledge, of wisdom, and of holiness.

Search, then, the Scriptures with increasing diligence, devotion, and fervour. “I have often been asked,” observes a striking American preacher and writer, “by young converts, and young men preparing for the ministry, what they should read. *Read the Bible!* I would give the same answer, five hundred times—*over and above all other things*, study the Bible. It is a sad fact that many young men, when they enter the ministry, often know less of the Bible than of any other book they study. Alas! alas! O if they had the spirit of James Brainerd Taylor, his love for the Scriptures—his prayer for Divine teaching—we should no longer hear the groans of the churches over the barrenness of so many young preachers, who come out of our seminaries full

of book-learning, and almost destitute of the Holy Ghost." The above observations may appear, to some, unduly strong, still there is much truth, as well as much force, in them, and they ought to be most seriously weighed.

In concluding this section, we would remind all students for the ministry, that what they actually learn at college is not so valuable, not so important, as the habits they form,—the discipline through which they have gone,—the knowledge which they have obtained of the *sources*, the best and purest sources, of information. The wide and extended vista of truth is opened before them. They see what is to be acquired—and what may, by diligence and perseverance, be acquired. They obtain mental training, sound, philosophical, enlightened. They gain a knowledge of books on the most interesting and valuable subjects. They become somewhat practised in composition, and leave the institution prepared, and, we should hope, disposed to be vigorous and successful students.

SECTION II.

MORAL HABITS AND MANNERS.

We would commence our observations by reminding our readers, that we attach *special importance* to this department of the subject. The habits and manners of a student for the Christian ministry cannot be too carefully formed—cannot be too rigidly scrutinised—and, provided they are correct, they cannot be too earnestly maintained. We consider, with all right-thinking men, that the *moral* discipline of a candidate for the holy ministry—the conversation he is daily indulging—the manners he is daily exemplifying,—the spirit he is daily unfolding—should be regarded as being of even higher moment than his intellectual culture. Shall we not positively affirm, that the moral discipline of the candidate for the sacred office is of *greater, much*

greater consequence, than the intellectual? There may be the finest acquisitions—there may be the possession of the most superior mind—there may be the development of original and commanding genius—there may be, in a word, a constellation of the highest intellectual qualities furnished by a theological student; but, if his habits are bad—if his manners be inconsistent and unseemly—if he conduct himself in such a manner as is unworthy of his position, and of the profession which he has assumed—we at once inquire, is not the lustre of his intellectual attainments obscured? Is not the power of his abilities, however commanding, materially diminished? Is there any feeling more strongly awakened than one of regret, deep and unmingled regret, that a young man possessing such talents, unfolding such acquirements, and who might be rendered so extensively useful by their vigorous cultivation, should so essentially diminish his weight and influence by his imprudences—by his deviations from the proprieties of daily life—by his ebullitions of temper—by his departure from that line of dignified and unimpeachable conduct, which he ought steadily and pre-eminently to pursue?

It should ever be remembered, by a student for the ministry, that he is *very narrowly watched*. He has many keen eyes fixed on him. Numbers are closely observing his habits—marking his general demeanour—listening to his general conversation, and forming their judgment of the temper which he developes. He occupies a public situation—he sustains a public character—and, consequently, he can do nothing without observation. His tutors—his fellow-students—the members of the church with which he is associated while at college—and all the families and congregations with which he may have intercourse during his academic career, are marking his behaviour, and forming and expressing their opinion of him when, probably, he least supposes it. A theological student, therefore, cannot be too careful—too wary—too much on his guard, that his deportment may

harmonise with his situation—that his uniform habits and spirit may correspond with the office, into the high and holy duties and relations of which he expects soon and fully to enter. Nothing in connexion with the moral habits of a divinity student is *little*, much less insignificant. Things, which would not be noticed in others, are marked in relation to him; and even the slightest and most incidental conversation is often long remembered, and produces an impression with regard to him, either favourable or the reverse. The moral bearing, therefore, of the candidate for the sacred office should always be dignified—his habits and conduct should be earnestly regarded by him.

In addressing a few specific and affectionate counsels to students for the Christian ministry, in relation to their manners and moral habits, we shall aim at conciseness—as it is our desire to be as comprehensive in our admonitory remarks as possible, and to induce private and personal reflection on some great principles.

1. In entering college, remember that your moral habits, and your general deportment, should command *universal respect and approbation*.

By your bearing—by your conversation—by your regard to propriety—by your refined and gentlemanly behaviour—by the amenity of your temper—by your urbanity—by your transparent consistency—it should be seen, and seen *at once*, that you will be an ornament to the college—that your example will be beneficial—that your spirit will be esteemed and highly appreciated. It is most necessary for a student to consider, that when he enters college this is expected from him, and if manifested, he will have the cordial approval of the truly excellent in the establishment, and, indeed, be universally valued and beloved.

2. During *the whole* of your residence at college, be *very careful of your general conduct*.

Begin as you intend proceeding—and proceed as you began. Let nothing be done from impulse, but everything from principle, and then you will be steady and undeviating. Be assured that you cannot, during your entire academic career, be too circumspect—too vigilant—too much on your guard. An opinion respecting your character, morally, as well as intellectually, is soon formed, and soon fixed. If you are vain, proud, petulant, overbearing, rude, sluggish, trifling, your character will soon be stamped, and the impression made against you will be very deep. If, on the contrary, you develop moral features which all must admire, and wish to express; if you are humble, kind, regular, industrious, prudent, in every sense of the phrase “the gentleman,”—not from your property, but from your manners, your deportment, your general habits,—a judgment respecting you will be entertained and expressed of the most favourable kind, which will operate most powerfully for your benefit. And be it particularly observed, that the opinion of students, respecting the moral character and habits of one entering college, is frequently formed, decisively and unalterably, in a few days, and often in the course of a *few hours*, after his arrival. Be exceedingly careful, then, of your conduct, when you enter the theological institution, where you are to remain four or five years; and, as long as you continue, let the same regard to your character and general deportment be discovered. If there be any change, let it be a change for the *better*—a steady and decisive advance in moral, as well as intellectual culture.

On entering college, *be determined to acquiesce in the arrangements which are made for the government of the academic family.*—There must be rules framed in connexion with every institution, and you are expected to observe them. There must be wise laws enacted, and you are required to obey them. There must be a system of discipline maintained, and you are expected, and very justly, to make your arrange-

ments and habits comport with that system. Be particular, we affectionately exhort you, in your attention and adherence to these principles. The enlightened acquiescence we recommend will materially affect your character, your acceptance, your progress. Guard against any deviation from this wise procedure. Avoid anything like unsubmitiveness. We advocate no injudicious and unmanly restraints. Quite the reverse. But do not injure yourselves, and others, by stubbornness and refractoriness. When you enter college, you enter engaging to conform to the rules of the institution. Let this conformity be maintained, in an enlightened, prompt, and unqualified manner. We have known many students injure themselves permanently, and even incur expulsion from college, because they have been determined to be refractory, and have refused to comply with the sound and wholesome laws of the institution with which they were associated. Do not imitate them. Make yourselves acquainted with the rules of the college before you enter it, and, when you enter it, be resolved that those rules shall be obeyed by you, in the most cheerful and unhesitating manner.

Defer to your Tutors.—They expect it from all their students; and not only expect it, but *require* it. They will not be harsh, coercive, overbearing towards you. As enlightened and Christian men they will treat you in a kind, bland, conciliatory manner, regarding you as gentlemen, and as future ministers and pastors. While, however, you are at college, they are not only entitled to your high respect, but they expect that you will invariably defer to them, and, if you think and feel correctly, you will habitually defer to them, and do it, not only from a sense of duty, but with the utmost pleasure.

You are bound to defer to your tutors from their *learning*; their attainments are extensive—their accomplishments are superior and finished—their erudition, in many instances, is profound.

Your deference is due to them from their *abilities* and *experience*. They have been selected from their long acquaintance with the ministry, or from their commanding talent, or from their tact in teaching, to occupy the situation which they fill; and, therefore, those who are committed to their care should uniformly defer to them on these grounds. Their character is most dignified—their position is most elevated and responsible—and you cannot respect them too highly. They are teachers, you are learners. They are eminently qualified to instruct you in their several departments. They are engaged to instruct you, and discipline your minds for the ministry—and, therefore, as wise and holy students, “sit at their feet.” Your deference, of course, is not to be servile or blind. This no professor expects or requires; but let it be intelligent, gentlemanly, spontaneous—the result of principle, flowing from respect and veneration.

This deference to your tutors will be a *great recommendation* to you. By it you will secure their good opinion; they will show you attention, and you will rise in their estimation. The favourable opinion of your tutors is, by no means, a matter of trifling importance.

Discover amiableness in your intercourse with your fellow-students.—Let there be “a sweet spirit” exemplified, and uniformly cherished. Be marked by your blandness—your obliging demeanour—your kind and affectionate disposition. Sedulously guard against anything that is hard or repelling in manner—anything that is austere or uncourteous. Nothing produces a more favourable impression on the minds of your fellow-students, and, indeed, on all observers, than the cultivation of the amiable feelings in your intercourse with each other. Spontaneously develop these emotions, and invariably unfold them, not merely from a sense of duty, but from an earnest desire to render your brethren *happy*.

You will be living together, as students for the ministry, for some period—a period, too, which will have considerable influence in the exhibition and improvement of character;—you will be meeting *daily* in your various classes—in the college hall—the college library—and in your respective studies; therefore, we would earnestly counsel you, do all you can to be *agreeable*.

Avoid moroseness—pettishness—an unsocial, an unfraternal spirit. Cultivate *the gentle virtues*. They are always exceedingly engaging in a student for the ministry. It is stated, with regard to Doctor Edward Williams, that his gentle virtues were no less endearing than his superior intellect was commanding. So it was with the late Doctor Chalmers. His amiableness was one of his marked characteristics—one of his most beautiful features. There was no austerity—no moroseness, but blended dignity, wisdom, suavity, and tenderness. A similar development was given by Robert Hall. With all the admiration poured forth on him—and all his unquestionable greatness—he was distinguished for his kind, amiable, benignant disposition. His spirit towards the poor of his flock finely evinced this. So it was with the venerable and sainted Doctor Waugh. He was the perfection of blandness and amiableness. So it is with the generality of really great minds. True greatness is commonly united with amiableness.

Cultivate, valued brethren, this temper. It will be an index to your character. It will be a beauteous ornament to you, while remaining at college, and a powerful recommendation to you after you have left the institution. An amiable spirit, when you enter on the pastoral office, you will find of unspeakable importance. Doddridge's advice is, "Indulge a submissive, yielding, obliging temper. An unreasonable stiffness in little matters will do unspeakable mischief. I almost tremble to see it in any designed for the ministry. I foresee in it the confusion of congregations and the ruin of your own character and usefulness."

Be unassuming.—Sure we are, that all competent judges will coincide with us when we remark, that nothing is more desirable in students for the ministry than an unassuming disposition and demeanour. There is nothing, too, which they will find more positively advantageous. It will operate at once—producing an impression, of so pleasing and deep a kind, that it is not soon obliterated.

Entertain, habitually, the most unpretending opinion of yourselves—of your acquirements—your abilities—your moral excellences. Show no airs: they are unseemly and offensive. Check every disposition that is arrogant and assuming; it is most unlovely and injurious. Guard against any tendency to vanity and self-inflation; it is most unnecessary and ridiculous. Always remember that *superior minds* are characterised by modesty of pretension. The greatest men are uniformly the most humble. The little man swaggers, struts, walks on tiptoe, assumes airs. The man of distinguished learning, genius, and worth, would consider it most unseemly and degrading to indulge anything like boasting or pretension. His mind is too well-disciplined—he is too discriminating—he is too sensible of his imperfection at all to assume.

You will see much and hear much, at college, to *humble you*—to bring down any remaining disposition to be vain, self-confident, and obtrusive. Where there are many young men continually meeting together, and superior learning and fine abilities discovered, perhaps, by not a few, little minds will be sure to find their level:—the vain student, the self-important pretender, will be checked—neglected—mortified—and deservedly chastised. He will be respected by none—sighted and despised by all.

In entering, then, on college life, be modest—indulge no pretensions—repress all vanity—make no display. If you are unassuming—uniformly humble and retiring—entertaining correct and enlightened views of your character, acquisitions, and abilities—and most anxious to guard against all

self-inflation. Your fellow-students will appreciate and esteem you. They will take you by the hand—impart to you encouragement, and be pleased to aid and serve you. You will thus perceive, though, perhaps, your attainments and talents may not be, by any means, commanding, that a humble disposition is that temper which God will bless, and which your brethren will delight to value and honour.

Regard punctuality.—This habit is most important and necessary for every person to maintain, if he wish to be respected, and, pre-eminently so, in the case of a student for the ministry. It is *essential* to his respectability—his progress in knowledge—his usefulness—his efficiency. Comparatively few candidates for the sacred office, we fear, appreciate the importance of punctuality, as it ought to be estimated. We would earnestly counsel every theological student to cultivate, from principle, the habit of punctuality. It will be of the utmost, and of permanent value to you; indeed, its advantage throughout life will be inestimable. As a member of the academic family, never be behind, if you can possibly avoid it. Never be wanting in precision, in arrangement. It is expected from you. You will suffer, if it be not discovered. You will rise in general estimation, if the habit be maintained; and you will accomplish as much again as you would, were a neglect of punctuality to mark your plans and your procedure.

Punctuality was a striking feature in the conduct of that useful and eminent minister, the Rev. Jehoiada Brewer, of Birmingham. During the period when he was a student his punctuality was marked, and most pleasingly observable. The students assembled with the tutor, at seven in the morning. On one occasion the clock struck seven, and all rose for prayer. The tutor looking round, and observing that Mr. Brewer was absent, paused awhile. Seeing him enter the room, he thus addressed him—"Sir, the clock has struck, and we were ready to begin; but, as you were absent,

we supposed it was *too fast*, and, therefore, *waited*." He was correct. The clock was too fast by *some minutes*.

Now we see, from this incident, what a character Mr. Brewer had gained among his fellow-students, and in the estimation of his tutor, by his precision, and what an impression was produced by his punctuality. Never view this as a *trifling* matter. Many disregard punctuality, but they never do so with impunity. They injure themselves, and are materially injured in the judgment of others. Let the habit of punctuality be ever most carefully maintained, and be one of the most conspicuous features in your character and conduct. Many showy qualities are, in the end, not half so valuable and ornamental as this.

Be *economical*.—Students for the ministry should be examples of frugality. It should mark all their plans, and pervade all their arrangements. They have not, generally, ample pecuniary resources. They have not, in very many instances, much to spare. Without a wise economy, they may soon experience great anxiety, and involve themselves in difficulty.

Not a few theological students much require this advice. They are somewhat thoughtless and profuse in their expenditure. We are convinced that the admonition tendered is of importance for them to regard. We wish no students for the ministry to be parsimonious, or mean. We dislike, exceedingly, a covetous, miserly disposition. A candidate for the sacred office should have a noble mind, and an expansive and generous heart. Still, it is incumbent on him to be *frugal* in all things, and, even if he possess some property, he must not be prodigal, or reckless, in his expenditure.

Study economy, dear brethren, in the *purchase of books*.—You will have many temptations to buy them, if you are residing in the metropolis—or near any of our large commercial cities. We would, however, say to you—*be careful*—be judicious. Do not accumulate too large a number.

Do not let your range be too wide. *Do not get into debt for them.* The bookseller's bill may render you most unhappy.

What books you buy, let them be those which *you require*, and let them be, in their several departments, of the *first order*. Increase them gradually, and as you can conveniently. In the course of years, by proceeding in this manner, you will acquire a valuable collection. What you purchase, *use well*. It is much better to have a small library carefully examined, than a very ample one neglected.

Be economical in the *purchase of clothes*.—There is, in this respect, great care necessary. Do not have too large a supply. Let them be good, but not too expensive, and, when you gain them, be careful in their use. Doctor Waugh used to observe, that he never liked to have more than *two* coats by him, when there were so many poor creatures who wanted even one.

Our earnest advice to you is—guard against *extravagance in anything*. It is a habit soon formed, and which, if formed, will prove most pernicious. Remember how many things there are which you *do not want*.

Avoid singularity.—Let nothing about you be strange—nothing in your appearance, manner, habits, be particular. Never act as though you must be different from other persons. Never so conduct yourselves as if you wanted to attract attention—as if you studied to gain notice. Remember, that singularity, that eccentricity, is, generally, the mark of a weak mind—a mind not maturely disciplined—a mind whose powers are not nicely balanced—a mind deficient in some of the noblest qualities. Where there is *true greatness* there will, ordinarily, be no eccentricity—nothing singular—nothing whimsical. Superior minds will rise above such littleness. They will regard such developments as being unwise, unworthy, degrading.

Besides, singularity very often originates from vanity. Persons who are eccentric have, frequently, a love of noto-

riety—a passion for display. They must be unlike others, in some respects, that their dissimilarity may be marked—that the public gaze may be fixed on them—that general attention may be concentrated on them; and they manifest this singularity in very little things—the peculiarity of their dress—the growth or adorning of their hair—their mode of expression—their walk and demeanour in public. Be assured of this, that singularity, for the sake of being singular, is not the mark of wisdom; that eccentricity is not the characteristic of a superior intellect; and that it is not rarely associated with considerable vanity, and even pride. Students for the ministry cannot too carefully avoid anything approaching singularity; it will infallibly operate against them. It will induce persons of intelligence and piety to form a judgment by no means the most favourable. It will often damage their usefulness. In connexion with a candidate for the sacred office, everything should be natural, unaffected, manly. He should always guard against being particular—if there are any occasional desires to be unlike other ministers, or pastors, let him extinguish them *at once*. Prevailing *good sense* will annihilate any wish to be singular.

Do not be inattentive to dress.—There is a great deal, often, in appearance, and, especially, of one preparing for the ministry. Character may frequently, in a considerable degree, be ascertained by it; and sure we are that it produces, on the minds of others, either a favourable or an unfavourable impression. We have known the opinion formed of some students and ministers to be almost decided, *at once*, by their appearance. Do not, then, be so unwise as to disregard appearance.

A Christian minister, and a candidate for the ministry, should be simple and neat in their attire—an attire corresponding with their character and office. There should be, there must be, nothing careless and slovenly—this would be most indecorous and unworthy; but, at the same time, there

must be no glitter—no parade—no mere display. The eyes of observers are very quick, and very penetrating, and we cannot prevent remarks being made, or impressions of an undesirable kind being soon produced.

A *simple elegance* of attire is that which the young minister should regard—an attire becoming himself and his office—which will excite no attention, but what is pleasing—call forth no remark, but what is gratifying. There should be no primness—no foppishness—no profusion of jewellery—no undue attention paid to the decoration of the person. If there be, a young minister will infallibly injure himself in the estimation of the wise and good, and, to a great extent, neutralise his ministry. Congregations can soon see when a young minister has his attention occupied with the decoration of the body, and a permanently unfavourable impression is produced.

Students for the ministry, err on the side of plainness, rather than expensiveness and elegance. Uniformly remember this, that the true gentleman and the true Christian are, generally, the most simple in their attire, and the most unpretending in their appearance. On this point, you cannot too carefully regard our advice.

Be not regardless of order.—This is an exceedingly desirable habit for every student and young minister to maintain. He will find it very conducive to his progress, as well as comfort. It is, also, highly important, as an index to mind and character; and it is, unquestionably, a *great recommendation* to a theological student. When a candidate for the sacred office is known to be one who forms no habits of order—when there is an utter want of plan, of arrangement—indeed, when everything is confused and disorderly, it is not only most detrimental to him, but there is an opinion expressed respecting him by no means favourable. Besides, as young ministers advance in life, and become acquainted with the routine of pastoral labours, what advantages will habits of order confer upon them!

We would, then, earnestly counsel all students for the Christian ministry to be persons of arrangement. Let not merely the habit of order be formed, but the *love* of order, for its own sake, prevail. We advocate no stiffness—no undue and unbending precision—but we do advocate the importance of undeviating attention to order.

Be admonished, to have *a time* for everything, and *a place* for everything. Let it be seen, by the distribution of your time—by the classification of your studies—by the appearance and arrangement of your libraries—by the disposal of your chambers, and, indeed, by all your movements, that you regard attention to order, in a minister of the Gospel, as being of considerable importance. Sure we are, that it is of much greater moment than many students are disposed to imagine.

If a young man be marked, while at college, for his want of arrangement and order, he will be characterised by it during, perhaps, *the whole of life*; and it will not only create a prejudice against him, but will operate most perniciously in relation to his studies, character, and ministry. It is stated with regard to George Whitfield, that so great was his attention to order, that it was observed in the *minutest* particulars. If he even put down a pair of gloves, he knew where to place his hand on them again.

The writer was acquainted with a distinguished young minister, whose arrangement was so perfect that he said to him—"I can find out almost any volume in my extensive library at any time—even *in the dark*, I should know where to find it without any difficulty."

Eschew four bad habits:—

Taking snuff.

Smoking pipes or cigars.

Frequent visiting.

Being out late at night.

Every person of correct thought and feeling will coincide

with us in the observation, that they are *most undesirable* habits for a young minister to form, and, if formed, the probability is that they will become inveterate, and that the results will be most seriously injurious.

Snuff-taking is a wretched, as well as a most unnecessary habit. Besides, it affects the voice, and sometimes *permanently* injures it. We have known some students who have emptied a snuff-box, of no ordinary capacity, daily. Do not imitate them. *Keep no snuff-box by you.*

The habit of smoking is one equally bad; in some respects, it is *worse*. It is an unnecessary habit—a vulgar and uncleanly habit; it often affects the health—it interferes with the comfort of others—it frequently leads to intemperance—and it lessens those young ministers who form the habit, and who maintain it to any extent, in the estimation of the intelligent, the well-bred, the pious. We have known some students who have smoked several pipes before dinner—even a pipe or two *before breakfast!!* Can anything, we ask, be more unseemly—more unwise—more pernicious? We think not.

Frequent visiting, and being out late at night, especially in or near the metropolis, or some of our great provincial towns, are habits which should be carefully guarded against. Not only are students robbed of much valuable time, and mental indolence and dissipation induced, but they are exposed to imminent moral dangers, and are often ruined by the power of temptation. We would earnestly say to theological students—*visit but little*—attend but few social and festive parties—and generally spend your evenings in your studies. They are precious hours, which you can scarcely too much value.

Habitually guard against levity.—While you are cheerful, buoyant, happy, and anxious to increase the happiness of all around you, never be light, frivolous, frothy. There is nothing more unseemly, in one designed and preparing for the ministry, than the manifestation of levity, especially

when it *becomes a habit*, expressed on almost every occasion, and before almost every company. Nothing degrades the character of a theological student more effectually—nothing produces a more baneful impression—nothing is more detrimental to his interests. It lowers him, *at once*, in the estimation of the truly excellent and devout of his brethren at college, and not only damages, but, if persisted in, *stabs* his reputation. We would, then, most fervently admonish every student and young minister assiduously to guard against all levity. There is great danger of neglecting the counsel; be, therefore, perpetually on your watch-tower.

Do not indulge levity and frothiness in your general conversation. It is a palpable and glaring evil, often developed by students. Be very anxious to avoid levity in your habits and ordinary demeanour. Some young men will carry levity into everything. It will be manifested in connexion with the most serious subjects, and the most serious exercises. Studiously shun, then, a frivolous, thoughtless, reckless manner, which is neither indicative of wisdom nor of piety. Be cheerful as the day, gladsome and happy as a morning in spring, but never be light and trifling. Nothing will more weaken your best feelings—nothing will *tell* more decidedly against you. You will find that nothing will be more favourable to you, or more beneficial, than a spirit of holy seriousness. It is the temper, too, which you should habitually cultivate, and without which there can be no blessing. Yours is a serious character—yours is a serious work; have, then, the spirit befitting your office and your object. A light and trifling minister is an evil to the church over which he presides—a calamity to the neighbourhood.

Guard particularly against levity in your intercourse with your fellow-students. Let them see, while you are cheerful and pleasant, you *never forget your character*, with the ministry before you. Do not discover anything like levity in the presence of Christian friends *after preaching*. It will annihilate any good impressions made by your discourses—

whatever might have been your eloquence or power, all will be unavailing. Indeed, your ministry will be neutralised. If, then, students for the ministry, you would maintain your self-respect, and enter into the true spirit of your office, you will never, in any *one* instance, be the harlequin of the college, the buffoon of the institution;—quite the reverse. While you are pleasant and vivacious, you will guard against levity, as being, in your situation, one of the deadliest evils.

Do not quote the Scriptures, in familiar conversation, irreverently.—You cannot be too careful, *habitually careful*, on this point. It is an admonition, unhappily, which theological students much require—for they often fall into the practice. We have frequently regretted, and *most deeply*, that there has not been, by any means, sufficient attention paid by many of them to this important matter. The Bible is a volume so sacred and holy in its character; so pure and elevated in its doctrines; so sublime and awful in its revelations; so authoritative and unqualified in its tone and requirements, that you cannot be too careful, too serious, in recurring to it. You should invariably allude to it with deep solemnity. You should ever quote it, when necessary, with reverence. You should always remember, it is God's book—the book with which you will, especially, have to deal—the book whose doctrines you will have to explain, whose principles you will have to inculcate and enforce—the book according to which you will be judged and your sentence definitively pronounced. Can you, then, trifle with such a volume as this? Can you flippantly quote passages, or expressions, of the Bible, simply to excite a laugh—to point a witticism—to discover your ingenuity?

Some have almost made the Bible their *jest-book*. A facetious observation, which they have been desirous should tell, has, if not derived from the Bible, had an edge given to it by some expression or allusion of the Bible. Is not

this not only most pitiful—most contemptible—but *most wicked—most disgraceful*? We can scarcely think of it without shuddering. Students of theology, beware, we entreat you, of falling into this evil—of committing this sin! It is one which we know, and lament, is often committed in institutions for the rising ministry.

Guard against mimicry.—It is, in connexion with any persons, by no means a desirable gift; in your case it is most perilous, and ought ever to be discouraged. We have known some students who have possessed great powers of mimicry, who have cultivated those powers, and who have, in consequence, involved themselves in much and permanent danger.

We were acquainted with a student of considerable ability, of fine elocution, of remarkable powers of imitation, who was, in this respect, *perfectly ensnared*. He was always imitating some public speaker. The disposition to “take off” those whom he heard address an audience became continually stronger, and he could do it with surprising facility. He would go and listen to several of our most eloquent and distinguished preachers, commit the finest passages of their sermons to memory, and then recite those passages, imitating their elocution and gesture; and one thing always struck the writer, that, if there were any little or undesirable peculiarities, either in voice or manner, those peculiarities or infirmities were *prominently* brought forward, to induce a laugh, at the expense of some devoted and eminent minister of the Gospel. So that the habit, in a young minister, is most undesirable, and ought to be, at once, discountenanced and checked. And it must be borne in mind, that the person who mimics strangers will soon take off his *own friends*, so that none are safe in his presence.

The habit, also, speedily grows, so that, at length, it becomes almost impossible to avoid its cultivation. Moreover, we simply ask, does it recommend the young man who

cultivates this talent, to the attention and regard of the wise and good? Quite the contrary. He is often shunned, and there is an impression produced, in no respect favourable to him, or calculated to promote his true interests. Buck, in his anecdotes, relates the case of a young man, a candidate for the ministry, who, possessing a talent for mimicking the tones of other men's voices, indulged it; and the consequence, after a while, was, that he was *unable to speak*, without falling into the imitation of some other person. And, when he became a preacher, this unhappy habit so pursued him, that he no sooner began to preach, than he excited the laughter of his audience; in consequence of which, he was under the necessity of abandoning the pulpit.

Every student for the ministry should remember this; and, if he possess any talent of mimicry, instead of encouraging it, he should, *at once*, decisively check it. If not, it will not merely be a snare to him—it may seriously impair his usefulness, and ruin his prospects. We have seen this in two or three instances.

Be marked by your delicacy and purity.—Let this be a prominent feature in your character—let it pervade and beautify all your habits and conduct. Nothing, doubtless, can be more important, more necessary. What is a minister of the Gospel worth, without delicacy—without *the utmost purity*? In this respect, he ought to be *above suspicion*. The most unlimited confidence ought to be reposed in him, else his true character cannot be exemplified. He is to “be an example of the believers” in “purity,” as well as in “faith and charity.”—(1 Timothy iv. 12.)

Students for the Christian ministry, let nothing characterise and distinguish you more than habitual chasteness and purity. Let the mind be unstained. Be pure even in imagination. Let your conversation be uniformly marked by its purity—by its freedom from everything like indelicacy:

let it be chaste, pure, as well as "sound speech which cannot be condemned." You cannot be too particular in relation to this matter. Any deviation from the principles we inculcate will jeopardise your character, will wither your ministry.

Maintain the nicest sense of honour.—In all your transactions with others, all your dealings with persons in business, discover the utmost integrity—the most elevated principle. Abhor anything that is mean or dishonourable. Let your engagements be fulfilled. Let confidence in your word not be put to shame. Let the honour of a Christian minister ever be regarded and exemplified by you. In all pecuniary matters, let implicit dependance be placed in you. It is expected by others—it is required by God—it is demanded by your own character and office. A dishonourable student, or young minister, is one of the most disreputable persons, and he is certainly unworthy of the most sacred and honourable office which any human being can fill. And, especially, in your engagements with the other sex, be exceedingly prudent, still *be honourable*—strictly, unimpeachably honourable. Let not solemn promises be wantonly broken. Let not the most decisive pledges be recklessly violated. Let no virtuous, amiable, pious young female, devotedly attached to you, have her heart broken, her days shortened, her happiness destroyed, by your explicit promise being falsified—your most sacred vows being forfeited. We can conceive of nothing more unmanly, disreputable, and heartless, than such conduct; and this admonition is very necessary to young men designed for the ministry.

Be, then, honourable, strictly honourable—in *all* respects, honourable. Let your consciences be "void of offence." Let no just charge of reproach be brought against you. Let no persons—no character—no family—ever be injured, or treated dishonourably by you. This is a matter which you

cannot too carefully regard. Always act from principle, then you will studiously regard it.

Do not cherish an envious disposition.—There is danger of this being exhibited; and, indeed, it is often exemplified. “The spirit that is in us lusteth to envy.”—(James iv. 5.) It discovers true nobleness of mind, when we can rejoice in the *superiority* of another: his eminence in learning, in abilities, in popularity, in usefulness. Endeavour to cultivate this spirit. It is a beautiful feature of character, which you should be desirous of exemplifying. When you perceive any of your fellow-students superior, decidedly superior to you,—unfolding talents, acquirements, powers of address and persuasion, with which yours cannot be at all compared,—while the circumstance stimulates you, let it not induce you to envy their fine acquisitions. Endeavour to cherish gratitude to God for their superior abilities—their superior fitness for usefulness.

“I have often prayed,” observed an eminent minister, “for power *to rejoice in the gifts of others*. This is no mean gift. To do this, our eye must be single. If God’s glory is the real and reigning aim of our souls, we shall rejoice in the gifts of others which tend to that end, and obtain a happy conquest over a selfish and jealous spirit.” These are noble sentiments, worthy of the servant of Jesus Christ; sentiments which theological students, mingling continually together, cannot too assiduously cultivate. They will conduce as much to their mutual improvement as to their personal and mutual happiness.

Endeavour to gain, at all times, the approbation of your tutors.—Be satisfied with nothing less than their decided, their marked approval. Let it be your continual aim, that they should express the most favourable opinion respecting your intellectual progress and moral culture. What object, next to the Divine approbation, can be more worthy

of your ambition? What duty should you be more anxious to discharge? What wish should you be more solicitous to gratify? How important is their approbation in your case, at all periods, but especially *at the outset* of your ministry! How effectually can they recommend you! What an introduction to the churches will their high recommendation of you furnish! How will it stimulate you to labour in such a manner, as that you may continue to merit their eulogy! On the contrary, if they are, from principle, against you—if your neglect, apathy, little progress, or undesirable habits, excite their regret and displeasure, so that they cannot recommend you, only consider how their disapprobation will affect you—how it will injure and wither all your prospects.

Now, that you may secure the unqualified approval of your tutors, do everything at college *as well as possible*; with as much precision, care, and finish, as you can discover; and let your moral habits correspond with your intellectual, so that it would be almost impossible to speak unkindly of you. Then, with what cordiality and delight will your tutors express their approval, and furnish their joint recommendation, when you leave the institution; and with what pleasure and gratitude will that approval and recommendation be received by you. You cannot be too attentive to this advice. Regard to it you will find of the *first importance*.

Guard against a critical, carping, censorious spirit.—This is a disposition which students are very prone to indulge, and which is often displayed by them in a very unlovely manner. “They are nothing, if not critical.” And not merely so, they blend not a little censoriousness and waspishness, frequently, with it.

We have known some students of theology always indulging this spirit, with regard to their fellow-students, and to ministers of the Gospel whom they occasionally hear.

They are never satisfied. They are always carping. They are ever finding fault. They are continually specifying defects, without recurring to excellences ; and sitting in judgment on men whose talents are superior, whose experience of human nature and of the ministry is profound, and whose labours God has signally blest.

We would say, most *earnestly*, to young ministers, check this disposition. It is undesirable, improper, dangerous. It sours the spirit—it warps the judgment—it diminishes the reputation of a student, and, eventually, inflicts on him considerable injury.

Let your views be enlightened, just, comprehensive ; your judgment discriminating and sagacious ; but carefully remember that cynicism and censoriousness are not sound criticism ; that there may be much complaining of others, and, yet, much injustice ; that the most intelligent and able men are the *most candid* as hearers of the Word, or in forming and expressing their judgment of the intellectual qualities of others ; and where they, perhaps, see many deficiencies, they are not insensible to numerous excellences which they can appreciate and admire. This is the spirit we wish you to cherish. It will be a great recommendation to you in passing through life ; it is the spirit of sound philosophy ; and, assuredly, it is the disposition you would wish others to cultivate and display with regard to yourselves.

Always develop the habits of the student, the gentleman, and the minister of Jesus Christ.—Let the appropriate dignity of your character ever be maintained. Let the respectability of your station ever be before your mind, that you may not act unworthily ; in a manner which would be unbecoming your position—discreditable to yourself, and bringing discredit on your office. Yours, valued brethren, is an honourable, most honourable station, and it requires to be filled in a manner truly and invariably honourable.

Be, then, every one of you, the *student*—the enlightened, the amiable, the persevering, the admired student.

Be the *gentleman*—in your conversation, your appearance, your manners, all your deportment.

Be the *minister of Jesus Christ*.—Show, by your habits, your spirit, your conduct, with whatever company you mingle, that you are not forgetful of this. Then, wherever you go, you will be respected; your example will operate; your daily habits, and the dispositions you exemplify will speak powerfully in your favour; and while your intellectual character commands attention and inspires interest, your moral character, broadly and beautifully unfolded, will awaken a more powerful feeling, and be associated with a higher charm.

“ — While virtues of the mind will shine,
The virtues of the heart will brighter beam.”

SECTION III.

PIETY IN STUDENTS FOR THE MINISTRY.

Many things may be specified as being necessary for every candidate for the sacred office, and at the present period especially; but to what can we recur which is so necessary as *personal religion*—the life of God in the soul; experimental, realising, practical piety? Other things may be desirable and valuable; this is indispensable. Other things may be commendatory, may be ornamental; this is absolutely requisite. Other things may be useful, highly useful; this is vital—uniformly and increasingly necessary. The theological student may proceed without other things; he cannot, however, advance *without this*. He may discharge his engagements without many accomplishments and acquisitions; he can, however, never perform them, under the influence of correct sentiments and motives, or to any great and permanently useful results, without this. He must be

experimentally acquainted with the rise and progress of religion in the soul; he must be conversant with regenerating and sanctifying grace; he must have "the mind of Christ;" in a word, he must be made "a new creature in Christ Jesus." Christian principles must be possessed—Christian views entertained—Christian motives felt—Christian dispositions cultivated—the Christian life, the life of Heaven, pursued.

Personal religion, in a high degree, is *pre-eminently valuable* to a student for the Christian ministry. The peculiar beauty and charm of his character will mainly consist in the development of the life, vigour, and harmony of the graces of the Holy Spirit of God. He may enter college possessed of fine acquirements, having realised great previous advantages; he may be full of animation and intellectual ardour; he may be determined to take and maintain a high standing among his fellow-students; still, if he want piety, "vital and heaven-descended piety," what will he, as a young minister, be worth? Will not the *principal* thing—the essential requisite, be wanting; that which would regulate, chasten, mould, sanctify, supremely elevate, everything besides—and without the possession of which there can be no fitness for the work—no prosperity in discharging its duties—no glory redounding to the Saviour?

We would, therefore, not only exhort, but solemnly conjure students for the holy ministry to examine themselves very closely and impartially on this vital point; as the slightest uncertainty *here*—the slightest mistakes *here*—the slightest deception *here*—will embitter their happiness, seriously affect their reputation, and neutralise their future ministry.

We would affectionately remind you, valued brethren, that sterling, deeply-seated, inwrought piety is expected from you. The anticipation is cherished that you are, without doubt, *men of God*—the consecrated servants of Jesus Christ, not merely by official situation, but by holy

character, and holy principles. The conviction is entertained that you are the partakers of Divine grace, and the heirs of immortal glory. Piety is expected to be developed by you, on the part of your tutors, your fellow-students, the church of God. Let not their expectations be fallacious. Let not their hopes prove abortive. Let not their convictions with regard to you be unfounded and delusive.

Genuine and elevated piety is not only expected, it is *demande*d—loudly and solemnly demanded from you, by the situation which you occupy, the character which you sustain, the duties to which you are called, the prospective engagements, so hallowed and responsible, which you will be required throughout life to perform. Without love to Christ—hatred to sin—superiority to the world—consecration to the great object of the ministry, what hypocrisy are you indulging! What iniquity are you committing! What injury are you inflicting on yourselves and others! What disgrace are you entailing! What seeds of bitter compunction and remorse are you sowing, which will be sure to spring up, and yield an abundant harvest—most deplorable and appalling! See, then, we beseech you, that, in a matter of such vital consequence, all is right—all is sound. See that you are not deceiving yourselves and others.

Your piety, as students for the ministry, must be *transparent*. There must be no disguise—no obscurity—no uncertainty. Your Christianity must be known—seen—read. There must be a clear and full development. The exhibition must be noiseless and simple, but luminous and decisive. The Christian character, in all its purity, elevation, and beauty, must be unfolded in such a manner as that there may be no mistake with regard to its features and lineaments.

You must be “living epistles.” All by whom you are surrounded—all with whom you associate, must take knowledge of you, that the love of Christ warms and possesses

your hearts—that the spirit of Christ is cherished by you—and that your reigning desire is to advance the glory of Him whom you are solicitous to serve, to follow, to honour.

A transparency of religious character is what you are bound to develop, and what, we hope, by the grace of God, you will be enabled to discover, in all situations, however arduous—in all circumstances, however varied and perplexing.

Your piety must not only be transparent, it must be *eminent*.—Your character is honourable; your station is difficult; your engagements will be, throughout life, arduous and responsible; your temptations will often be powerful and trying; your solitudes will be frequently intense and oppressive; your discouragements in the ministry will, at times, be singularly painful; and, therefore, you will require grace from God your Saviour in no ordinary degree, that you may be fitted for your work, sustained under all your anxieties and sorrows, and enabled to persevere in your undertaking, “enduring hardness as good soldiers of Jesus Christ.”—(2 Tim. ii. 3.)

You should constantly aim at the possession of no common share of piety, and devotedness to God. Your temper should be holy; your views of Divine truth clear, profound, and realising; your love to God should be ardent; your humility and self-abasement should be deep; your consecration to the Lord Jesus should be devout and entire; your passion to be useful—to bring sinners to the Redeemer—should be glowing.

Without *eminent* piety you will not be distinguished by activity, energy, constancy, usefulness. You may be eminent as linguists, as logicians, as philosophers, as orators, but of what utility, comparatively, are these acquisitions, to whatever extent possessed, unless it can be added, that you are *eminent as Christians?*

Let, then, your experience of Divine things be rich and

extensive; your consciences tender, faithful, and holy; your religious affections and sensibilities very delicate and lively; your exercise of devout feelings constant and animated; your spirituality of mind habitual; then you will be "strong in grace;" then you will be pre-eminently fitted for all your studies, and all your labours; then you will continually honour the Saviour, and you will be rendered, throughout life, permanent and extensive blessings to immortal souls.

Let your piety be *progressive*.—Never be stationary in the Divine life. Your motto should be, in relation to everything which is calculated to warm, elevate, and benefit the heart, "*We must advance*. We dare not, cannot stand still, much less recede. We will 'add to our faith' all the other graces of the Holy Spirit, and desire and strive to 'grow in them exceedingly.' Our path shall resemble the morning light, increasingly clear, beautiful, and glorious, until the perfect day of immortality arrive."

This is the spirit which you should cultivate; and, in its development and cultivation, you will find that you have no trifling work before you. It is a work which will demand the utmost solicitude, watchfulness, effort, striving, and reliance on the sufficiency of the Saviour's grace, until you shall finish your labours in the church below, and be conveyed to a brighter and happier world, even to the presence of God and the Lamb.

Let your piety be unfolded *by your love to secret prayer*.—Enter *regularly* into your closets for the observance of devotional exercises. Commune habitually in retirement with your God. Maintain close and unceasing intercourse with the Saviour. Never be indifferent, we beseech you, to private prayer. It will give clearness and elevation to your religious views; it will materially aid you in your studies and theological inquiries; it will invigorate all the graces of the Christian character; it will not only enkindle, but con-

tinually increase, in power and intensity, every holy energy. It will impart a purity and an exquisite beauty to your religious profession; it will be a preservative amidst all the temptations and dangers to which, as students and young ministers, you are exposed—and they are manifold and peculiar; and you will find, in every duty, in every movement, that its utility and importance are incalculable. Your devout feelings will never be strengthened, your religion will never be fed, without close and earnest attention to secret prayer.

Let your piety be unfolded *by your devotional study of the Scriptures*.—Examine them narrowly, not merely as students for the ministry, but as sinners—as those who are anxious to enjoy Christ, and solicitous to advance in religion, to “grow in grace,” to develop the varied features of the Christian character. Your language, individually, should correspond with that of the prophet Jeremiah—“Thy words were found, and I did *eat them*; and thy word was unto me the joy and rejoicing of mine heart; for *I am called by thy name*, O Lord God of Hosts.”—(Jer. xv. 16.)

You will realise the utmost, indeed priceless advantage, from the *devout* study of the word of God. The memory will not only be enriched, but sanctified. The greatest principles—those which come immediately from God himself—will be lodged in the mind, and regulate the life. Your thoughts, your affections, your desires, your very language, will have elevation and beauty imparted to them, if you are devotionally and profoundly conversant with the inspired volume. “Your souls will be satisfied as with marrow and fatness.”—(Psalm lxiii. 5.) It is impossible for you to have your piety promoted, and your Christian experience enlarged and deepened—or for you to “increase, with all the increase of God,” unless you examine, habitually, under the influence of the most humble, docile, devout frame of mind, “the truth as it is in Jesus.”

We fear that many students, even for the holy ministry, do not pay that *devotional* attention and regard to the Scriptures, without which there can be no blessing—no spiritual progress. They are too apt to examine the sacred volume critically, not devoutly; as biblical students, that inquiries may be met, and difficulties removed; not as humble, earnest Christians—not as penitent sinners, that the heart may be benefited, that the love of Christ may be enkindled and increase in the soul.

We would fervently exhort all students for the ministry not to suffer *one day* to elapse without the sacred volume being investigated and *prayed over*, in the exercise of the most penitential, devout, and intense emotions. This is the way to make religious progress, and to have the word of God dwelling within, in all wisdom and spiritual understanding.

Let your piety be unfolded by *holy meditation*.—Practise devout contemplation. Let your minds be accustomed to meditate frequently, indeed habitually, on *Divine subjects*. While the intellect is engaged in general studies, let *the heart*, as well as the mind, be occupied and benefited by fixed and holy meditation. Accustom yourselves to that enlarged and devout contemplation, by which your acquaintance with the great truths of revealed religion will be increased, by which they will be imprinted more deeply on the memory, and produce a more profound and beneficial impression on the spirit. Be habitually familiar with that retired and serious reflection which is associated with self-examination, the most impartial and minute self-scrutiny.

Holy meditation will feed your piety, and prove of inestimable advantage to you. By indulgence in it, you will be elevated above the world, a remarkable impulse and vigour will be given to your best feelings and desires, and your progress in everything spiritual and divine will be effectually subserved. Students for the Christian ministry, be pecu-

liarily characterised by your love of devout contemplation! Let it be your habit, your delight, even your passion. You can never grow in Divine knowledge and grace without continual indulgence in it. It will chasten and beautify the mind, while it will adorn and elevate the character. Be not merely devoted to study, to intellectual inquiries, to critical and philosophical investigations, but be distinguished by the habit of retired, deep, and holy contemplation, which you assiduously cultivate, in which you take so much interest, and enjoy so much happiness.

Let your piety be unfolded *by the heavenly temper you cherish*.—By the devoutness of your spirit—by the sanctity of your thoughts—by the purity of your affections and desires—by the humility you breathe—by the meekness you discover—by the love you exemplify—by the docility you exhibit—by the spirituality you display; in a word, by your intense solicitude to acquiesce in your Saviour's will, to be moulded in your Saviour's image, to be closely and increasingly assimilated to your Saviour's likeness. You are peculiarly required to discover “the mind of Christ”—to cultivate the very temper of the skies; and, if you do not aim at the development of this spirit, where is the true beauty of your character? Where is your resemblance to your Lord? Where is your fitness for the great and responsible work to which you profess to be devoted?

Let your piety be unfolded by your *seizing every opportunity* of increasing in personal religion.—You will, under the most favourable circumstances, have many temptations at college; you will be exposed to peculiar snares and dangers—and perpetual vigilance and prayer will be necessary that you may not sustain injury. If, however, you possess eminent piety, you will be always on your watch-tower. You will preserve holy wakefulness. You will exercise sleepless caution. You will be continually inquiring

—"What is now most requisite? In what is there the greatest danger? In connexion with what is there the greatest tendency to failure? Against what particular temptations should there be the most vigorous guard maintained?" And you will feel intensely anxious, during the whole of your academic career, that your piety may not be impaired—that your delight in prayer may not lessen—that your love to Christ may not decline;—indeed, it will be your constant aspiration that the life of godliness may be maintained within you, and discover fresh and ever-augmenting energy. And, in order that your wishes may be realised, you will follow up every plan, embrace and improve every opportunity, by securing which your religious impressions may be deepened—your holy feelings acquire additional power and vividness—your communion with heaven be promoted—your progress in the divine life steadily advance.

You will watch for opportunities of spiritual improvement, and, if you cannot find them prepared for you, you will *create* them, in order that the love of Christ may be cultivated—the love of souls may be maintained—and all the features of the Christian character may be expressed with great simplicity, symmetry, and beauty.

That your piety may be promoted, during your residence at college, attend to the following concise directions:—

Meditate on *the vast importance of eminent holiness to a minister of Jesus Christ*.—There is nothing which stamps his mind and character so broadly and so decisively. There is nothing which communicates to him greater beauty. There is nothing which connects with all his conversation, habits, and procedure, a more fascinating charm. It raises his character to a commanding elevation, imparting to it the highest nobility and grandeur—investing it with a chasteness, a richness, a sanctity, which awaken the deepest interest, and produce the most powerful impression. Aim at the development of this eminent holiness. Let it be cultivated

with the utmost vigour and assiduity. Its moment to *you* is incalculable. Without it, every acquisition, every advantage, every circumstance favouring you, will be of comparatively trifling importance. This is the great acquirement for you to gain. This is the precious jewel for you to possess. This is the "one thing needful" for you to secure, and uniformly to realise.

Only contemplate how distinguished holiness will *aid you* in pursuing all your studies and engagements. What light it will impart!—what direction it will afford!—what help from above it will invariably furnish! Without it, you will not only be weakened, but paralysed. Nothing will be done properly—nothing efficiently.

Besides, what a recommendation will eminent holiness give to you! The enlightened, the wise, and the good, will be attracted towards you. Your spirit, your habits, your every action in connexion with the ministry, will excite their interest, and, not unfrequently, inspire their admiration. The beauty of holiness encircling you, will draw them resistlessly to you, and constitute, in their estimation, your brightest crown and glory.

Moreover, how superior holiness will surround you with the Divine presence! You will walk in the light of heaven. You will be illumined and cheered with that radiance which the Saviour himself sheds. You will find that the Lord will be "at your right hand." His power will be present to succour; his wisdom will be present to guide; his loving-kindness will be present to bless, and render ineffably happy. Thus that express and delightful assurance will be verified in your case, "My presence shall go with thee, and I will give thee rest."—(Exodus xxxiii. 14.)

Contemplate the connexion between your piety and *your future usefulness*.—That connexion is not only most intimate, but indissoluble. The one cannot be disjoined from the other. If your piety be lax, cold, inoperative,

your usefulness will be trifling; indeed, it will be effectually checked. And you cannot wonder at this; because, if such a spirit be developed, you will evince that you are *unconcerned about doing good*. Compassion for souls will not be cherished. Deep solicitude to rescue them from their moral degradation—to draw them to Christ—to be instrumental in admitting them to the Divine family—will not be expressed and cultivated. Anxiety to glorify the Lord Jesus will not pervade the mind, and influence and control all your arrangements and procedure. And if there be little or no concern to be useful, you may be assured of this, that usefulness *will not be realised*.

Your engagements, too, will be discharged *professionally*. Not from love; not under the influence of enlightened seriousness; not from the power of high principle; but in a listless, jejune, perfunctory manner. You will simply attend to one engagement and another, because, in your situation, they must be fulfilled—because they are expected and required from you; not because you highly estimate your office, delight in your work, are impressed with the responsibility of your position, and supremely desirous of executing the ministry given to you by the Lord. Now, cultivating this cold, apathetic, unworthy temper, how can you at all calculate on a blessing?

Where, however, there is distinguished piety possessed by a young minister, he will be marked by his holy fervour; by his deeply-seated compassion for immortal souls; by his absorbing solitudes to be useful—signally useful—to be the honoured agent, in the hands of the Spirit of God, of teaching many, of leading many, of impressing many, of communicating happiness to many, of bringing many to heaven—and, be persuaded of this, these solitudes will be gratified. Those who honour the Saviour in this manner will be invariably honoured by him in return. They will never be permitted to labour without some tokens of the Divine approbation—without reaping some “precious fruit.” It

will be seen, by the results of their labours, that they are not forgotten, but that "God is with them of a truth."

Cherish an *habitual sense of the Divine presence*.—Uniformly remember that God is your continual and most scrutinising observer; that he is marking all the sentiments which you are cherishing—all the motives by which you are governed—all the tempers which you are developing—and in so accurate and searching a manner as that there can be no possibility of mistake, or deception. Remember this, invariably,

In all your *studies*.—It will regulate them—chasten them—induce activity and energy in their prosecution—and constrain you habitually to regard their ultimate and supreme end.

In all your *conversation*, remember that God's eye is upon you. Let this thought be present with you in all your intercourse with your fellow-students; at periods, too, when there may be many temptations surrounding you, and peculiar dangers to which you may be exposed. It will have a most powerful and beneficial effect on you, in respect of your conversation with your fellow-students, and all your interchange of thought and feeling with them, while you remain at college.

In all your *habits and conduct*, let it be profoundly regarded that God is near you; that he is reading your character; that he is marking every arrangement you form, every action you indulge.

Realise this awakening consideration. It will deeply solemnise; it will habitually impress; it will be a continual guard; it will be a perpetual incitement to abound in watchfulness and prayer.

Walk with God. Live and act as beneath his immediate and thorough inspection. Your piety will be materially promoted. Your holy vigilance will be constantly maintained. You cannot be careless or apathetic with regard to the

cultivation of personal holiness, if this spirit be uniformly cherished.

Be most intimate, during your academic career, with those students *who are the most devout*.—There are always some of this character at college, who are living near to God—who cultivate much of the spirit of the Redeemer—who are marked by great humility, and tenderness of conscience—and who are studying and preparing for the ministry, simply from a desire to glorify Christ. Let these be *specially* regarded. You will find this recommendation of immense and permanent advantage to you.

Study their character attentively, mark their habits and deportment. Catch something of their spirit. Make them your chosen friends. Select them as your constant companions. They may not have the learning of some in the institution; they may not possess the brilliant gifts of others; still, do not let this consideration be a barrier in the way. They may be, to you, inestimable blessings. Remember, that piety, fervent and enlightened piety, is the *main* thing which God and the church require; and the influence of a few devout companions, during your residence at college, may be to you of unspeakable importance while there, and, indeed, throughout the whole of life.

Let some practical and devotional author be *daily read by you*.—This habit will be of inestimable utility. Not merely will your theological knowledge be increased—your views of the distinguishing and vital subjects of the Gospel become more enlarged, discriminating, and profound, but your piety will be fed—your best and warmest feelings will be enkindled—your heart will be benefited, and all the graces which compose the Christian character invigorated.

You cannot be familiar with the devotional and practical writings of Howe and Bates—Hall and Flavel—Manton and Bunyan—Alleine and Baxter—Doddridge and Watts—

without realising incalculable advantage; and let it be a rule with you, to have the biography of some holy minister, or distinguished follower of the Lord Jesus, continually in perusal. Nothing will be more conducive to your spirituality—to your advancement in the Divine life—to your increasing preparedness for your great work. You have the amplest and the richest supply now furnished of volumes of this character, and a wise selection, a careful and frequent perusal of some of the choicest examples afforded, will not only enrich the mind, but strengthen every holy principle, and inspire, and continually render more intense and influential, the best feelings of the heart.

While at college, hear, as much as possible, when disengaged, *the same minister*.—This, we are persuaded, is a *valuable rule* for a student to lay down, and by which to be governed, though, unhappily, it is one often disregarded, and, in very many instances, completely forgotten. If you are at all anxious that your piety should be promoted during your residence at college, do not, we entreat you, cherish continually a *roving disposition* with regard to your attendance on Divine worship, and the ministers of the Word to whom you may listen. It is a disposition as unseemly as unprofitable. While we wish you, by all means, to hear some of the most distinguished preachers of the age, do not be constantly proceeding to various places of worship on the Lord's day, under the influence, perhaps, of no other motive than one allied to curiosity, the love of novelty, or a desire to have the taste gratified, and the imagination delighted.

Select, as soon after your entrance on college as possible, some enlightened, holy, and devoted pastor, whose preaching you value, whose spirit you admire, whose labours you appreciate, and sit under him as regularly as your engagements will allow. It will be exceedingly conducive to your instruction and edification, to the promotion of a state of high and animated piety.

We have known some theological students who have been continually rambling, on the Lord's day, to hear one popular preacher and another, with feelings akin to those which prompt the giddy multitude to run after distinguished actors. And what has been the result? "Itching ears" have been created. A spirit merely critical and censorious has been induced. They have become dissatisfied with plain, solid, experimental, practical, decidedly useful preaching. They have always been seeking and craving after eloquence, originality, brilliance, and their own souls have materially suffered.

We, therefore, urge you most affectionately, and most warmly, valued brethren, while you remain at college, especially if resident in or near the metropolis, to fix on some honoured minister of the Lord Jesus, whose public services you resolve to attend, when not officially engaged yourselves; regard him as your pastor, and *communicate* with his church as frequently as you can. Such an arrangement will settle the mind, and eminently conduce to your growth in grace, and to your fitness for the great work which you are anticipating.

Be determined to leave college under the influence of *a more devout and elevated spirit* than when you entered it.—Vigilantly guard against any declension in your piety, while you remain beneath the academic roof—any departure from God—any diminution in your love to Christ—any indisposedness for religious and purely spiritual exercises—in a word, any dereliction of Christian duty. Such evils are, unhappily, often incurred by divinity students. There are numerous and distressing exemplifications furnished of young men preparing for the ministry, who have left their "first love"—departed from God their Saviour in relation to the devotion and fervour of their spirits—and manifested almost a distaste for engagements simply spiritual. Their minds have been absorbed in intellectual pursuits—their passion has been

to acquire knowledge, to invigorate the mental faculties, to excel, perhaps to gain a distinguished position while at college, and after their removal from it; and, hence, their hearts have been injured; devotional feelings have been impaired; instead of advancing in the Divine life they have receded, and, when they have terminated their academic career, they have ascertained, and that, too, most mournfully, how God has been neglected, how the Saviour has been grieved, how their own souls have been robbed, grievously impoverished, by the comparative want of that fervid, holy, devout feeling, which they ought most assiduously, and in the *first instance*, to have discovered and cultivated.

There has been, on the part of many divinity students, too little watchfulness. They have been careless, indolent, morally and religiously supine and unheeding, and we have not wondered that they have declined as regards the cultivation of the best and purest affections. You must, during your collegiate course, be assured, exercise *sleepless vigilance*. You must ever occupy your watch-tower. There must be the most diligent and minute inspection of your own hearts, that the current of devout feeling may not be checked; that love to Christ may not be impaired; that the slightest unfitness for holy duties, or reluctance to their performance, may not be discovered. And this unceasing vigilance is of paramount importance, when you consider the number of young students with whom you are called to associate, and, among them, so marked a diversity of taste, habit, and character. Many of them, perhaps, not only full of buoyancy—characterised not merely by their cheerfulness and pleasantries—but, probably, by no means sufficiently careful in checking that tendency to levity, and excessive hilarity, so often manifested within the walls of our colleges.

You must, also, be particularly attentive, while pursuing your studies, to *secret prayer*. No intellectual engagements, however important, however highly estimated by you, must

ever be allowed to interfere with this momentous duty, much less, under any circumstances, *supersede* it. Theological and literary students, we fear, have often been indifferent to secret prayer; indeed, it has been *neglected* by them, while elegant literature, philosophy, abstruse science, systematic theology, have successively occupied *all* their attention; and retired, fervid, devotional exercises, which would have been the very life of their souls, have been slighted, performed in a cold and hurried manner, and frequently omitted altogether. Can any surprise be expressed at piety declining under these circumstances? Impossible! we should only be astonished if it could advance.

Always remember, then, valued brethren, that nothing will so much fit you for your work as *eminent piety*.—It will prepare you most effectually for pursuing your varied studies, when you leave the academic roof, and for prosecuting them in an enlightened, vigorous, and truly profitable manner. It will aid you most efficiently in selecting your subjects for the pulpit, and in composing all your sermons. It will be of incalculable advantage to you when presenting public prayer, and will materially promote your comfort and usefulness when standing up to address your fellow-men. It will lend you essential help in discharging your pastoral engagements, in visiting your people, and especially in conversing with the pious poor, the afflicted, the dying, and those who have to realise peculiar temptations. It will be of the utmost service to you, in directing anxious inquirers to the Saviour. Loving Christ yourselves, and being entirely consecrated to his service, you will be supremely solicitous to draw them to the Lamb of God—to introduce them to the fold of the Good Shepherd.

Regard, ever regard, then, dear brethren, your piety, your devotedness to God, your elevation of devout sentiment, as “the one thing needful” for you to possess and exemplify. Nothing else, however interesting, amiable, attractive, can

for a moment be placed in comparison with it. We value learning in connexion with a student for the ministry; we appreciate superior and commanding talent; we admire cultivated address and fine eloquence; but what are these, in their highest development, without piety, distinguished piety? Be persuaded that this will be your charm—your crown—your glory! It will impart to you the utmost beauty. It will diffuse around you the purest, because celestial, lustre.

Be resolved, then, to leave college marked by *eminent sanctity*—by the most unreserved consecration to the Redeemer. Let all the graces which adorn the Christian character appear in you, in their symmetry, loveliness and vigour—“be followers of God, as dear children.”—(Ephes. v. 1.) Thus you will realise the utmost delight in your work; thus you will glorify the Lord Jesus, who has called you to labour in his vineyard; thus you will be favoured with his presence, and the tokens of his approval continually; and thus you will meet at last many, probably a very large number, who have been brought to the feet of the Redeemer, delivered from hell, advanced to the fadeless glory and unchanging bliss of heaven, through your instrumentality. What rapture, what pure and divine ecstasy will pervade your spirits, as you approach the glorified Saviour, humbly exclaiming, “Here are we, Lord, and the children whom thou hast given to thy servants!”

CHAPTER VII.

ADVICE TO THE YOUNG MINISTER ON PREACHING.

WE would introduce our observations, in this division of the subject, by emphatically reminding every theological student, every candidate for the sacred office, that *preaching the Gospel*, unfolding “the truth as it is in Jesus,” will be, eventually, his *great business*,—his prominent, unceasing, most arduous and honourable employment. He will, at his entrance on the regular engagements of the Christian ministry, have a wide range of duties to fulfil, demanding, for their appropriate and effective performance, the utmost wisdom, uncompromising fidelity, peculiar tenderness, deep seriousness, untiring energy, and the greatest simplicity of reliance on Divine agency. He will have to visit the poor, to administer suitable counsels and admonitions to the afflicted, to console and fortify the dying, to regard the young with peculiar kindness, to direct inquirers to the Saviour, to exercise scriptural discipline in the church, to guide and govern wisely the congregation over which he may preside, to pursue his studies in the most regular and undeviating manner, to exemplify the spirit and conduct of a Christian, a gentleman, a minister, towards all with whom he may come into contact. Still, it must ever be borne in mind by him, that his *great business* throughout life will be that of *preaching the Gospel*—proclaiming “the Word of Christ” to the people—announcing “the glad tidings of redemption” through the blood of Christ—continually to reiterate the cry, “Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world!”—(John i. 29.)

The Apostles were commissioned and sent forth, by Christ, to proclaim the Gospel. This was to be their most important, and their continual employment. "Go ye, therefore, and teach all nations,"—"*teaching* them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you;"—(Matt. xxviii. 19, 20;)—"and as ye go, *preach*, saying, the kingdom of heaven is at hand."—(Matt. x. 7.) "Go, stand and *speak* in the temple to the people all the words of this life. And when they heard that, they entered into the temple, early in the morning, and taught."—(Acts v. 20, 21.) "And straightway he (Saul) *preached* Christ in the synagogues, that he is the Son of God."—(Acts ix. 20.) "And he commanded us to *preach* unto the people."—(Acts x. 42.) "For Christ sent me not to baptise, but to *preach* the Gospel; not with wisdom of words, lest the cross of Christ should be made of none effect."—(1 Cor. i. 17.) "Unto me, who am less than the least of all saints, is this grace given, that I should *preach* among the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ."—(Ephes. iii. 8.)

Paul addresses Timothy in the following explicit manner: "*Preach* the Word; be instant in season, out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort with all long-suffering and doctrine."—(2 Tim. iv. 2.) He tells him, that "a bishop must be *apt to teach*."—(1 Tim. iii. 2.) He gives him the subjoined counsel—"The things that thou hast heard of me among many witnesses, the same commit thou to faithful men, who shall be able to *teach others* also."—(2 Tim. ii. 2.) Referring to his own example, and that of his coadjutors, he observes—"Whom we preach, warning every man, and teaching every man in all wisdom; that we may present every man perfect in Christ Jesus."—(Coloss. i. 28.) Addressing the Corinthians, he remarks—"For after that in the wisdom of God the world by wisdom knew not God, it pleased God, by *the foolishness of preaching*, to save them that believe."—(1 Cor. i. 21.) And we may conclude our citations by exclaiming, with him—"How beautiful are the

feet of them that preach the Gospel of peace, and bring glad tidings of good things!"—(Rom. x. 15.)

Now, what is the idea naturally and significantly conveyed to the mind, by these distinct and impressive representations? Unquestionably, the following:—that a called, an accredited minister of Christ sustains the character of a *public teacher*; that his great and uniform business is to preach to the people; to expound, apply, enforce the truth of God; and thus, by the Divine blessing, become "an able," a powerful, a successful "minister of the New Testament."

It is the Divine purpose, clearly unfolded in the Gospel, to "bring many sons to glory;" to rescue innumerable millions from the consequences of the fall; to renovate them by his Spirit, to "justify them freely by his grace," and to prepare them, by his sanctifying agency, for the bliss of Paradise. Countless multitudes, however, are now "sitting in darkness," dwelling in "the valley of the shadow of death;" enveloped in the gloom of spiritual ignorance; led astray by pernicious and fatal errors; debased by sin; and alienated from everything holy and divine. What, then, is to be the means of their recovery—of their moral renovation—of their spiritual deliverance? Nothing, unquestionably, but *God's own truth*. By this instrumentality they are to be enlightened, renewed, sanctified—"Being born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the Word of God, which liveth and abideth for ever."—(1 Peter i. 23.)

But a very important inquiry arises. Is the Bible, *of itself*, sufficient for the illumination and conversion of the world? It has been justly remarked, that, "had the Holy Scriptures *of themselves* been sufficient to constitute this instrumentality, God would have given the world the Holy Scriptures *only*. But he has appointed a distinct order of men, whose special and responsible employment it is, to illustrate, defend, and enforce the truth which he has revealed; to call up the attention of a world that lieth in

wickedness ; and, in humble dependance upon his Spirit, to “turn them from idols, to serve the living God,” and “to wait for his Son from heaven !” And is not the Divine arrangement marked by consummate wisdom ? Does it not display striking tenderness and love ?

“It is one of the great peculiarities of Christianity, that its Founder has instituted such a class of men as the *public teachers* of his religion. Orders of men there have been, and still are, in pagan lands, for the performance of religious ceremonies, and to conduct the pomp of lustrations and sacrifices ; but I have yet to learn, if there be any such order, either in ancient or modern times, except under the system of religion revealed in the Bible, set apart for the inculcation of moral and religious truth. On the other hand, the policy of false religions has been to excite the curiosity of men, without gratifying it ; to throw around their oracles the air of mystery ; to hold the world in the bondage of ignorance, and to have the credit of knowing what none but those who had intercourse with the gods knew.” *

We are increasingly persuaded of the truth of the observation, that “no religion, which does not owe its continuance to the wicked passions of men, can stand long, without an order of religious instructors. The pulpit distinguishes Christian lands from all other lands, whether Pagan or Mahometan. The pulpit is the defence, the strength, the glory, of the church, and, hence, the history of the pulpit furnishes the moral history of the world.”

Preaching is *God's great ordinance* for the edification of the church, and for the conversion of sinners to Christianity. Where one is brought to Christ by reading, *a hundred* are enlightened, and drawn to the Saviour, by the preaching of the Gospel with simplicity and fervency. Indeed, as regards the spiritual illumination and salvation of multitudes, we believe that the pulpit has been far more useful than the

* Spring.

press itself, with all its influence and gigantic power. "To the poor the Gospel is preached." "The living teacher is the great means of making known the Gospel." It must be borne in mind, that multitudes never read at all; their *only* information with regard to Christianity is, in the first instance, derived from the ministrations of God's servants in the sanctuary. Even at the present enlightened period there are hundreds of thousands, who scarcely ever peruse religious books. And are there not multitudes who are totally unable to read? We are convinced of the philosophy of the sentiment, that "a well-furnished pulpit is the fountain of religious knowledge." We believe, that even the most intelligent and thinking men—those who read extensively, and continually exercise their intellectual powers—derive their views and impressions, in a great degree, from the instructions and appeals of the pulpit; so that the value and efficacy of preaching the Word can scarcely be estimated with adequacy. "I have no doubt," observes a great writer, "that the public instructions of the sanctuary mould the moral intellect and character of man more than any other, and *all other* causes combined."

Only contemplate the immense amount of instruction, sound, scriptural, invaluable instruction, which must, in the course of twenty or five-and-twenty years, have been conveyed to the minds of those who listened to the discourses of Howe or Charnock—Bates or Manton—Baxter or Flavel—Philip or Matthew Henry. What views of truth must have been formed—what thoughts must have been awakened—what feelings and associations must have been excited—what impressions must have been produced, by the preaching of Cecil—Thomas Scott—Robert Hall—Chalmers—McAll—and many other distinguished men, to whom we might refer! And, even in relation to the plainest and most experimental ministry, without any pretensions to vigorous and superior intellect, but unfolding, simply, the leading truths of Scripture in a lucid, affectionate, and persuasive manner,

what impressions must be made, during revolving years, on the minds of multitudes of hearers—and what conceptions must be formed of the vital and distinguishing doctrines of the Gospel! An enlightened and faithful minister of the Word preaches one hundred and fifty or two hundred sermons in the course of every year. All the resources of his mind—all his acquaintance with Scripture—all his intellectual and moral energies—all his holy emotions and affections, he is bringing to bear on his people, for their personal, their immediate benefit—their attraction to Christ—their restoration to the Divine image—their happiness in all the relations of society—their preparedness for every change of life—their fitness for death—their introduction to eternity—their enjoyment of the bliss of immortality. Now, let us contemplate, for a moment, what a mass of Christian and well-digested instruction—what invaluable principles—what lucid and comprehensive développments of truth—what powerful appeals—what rich encouragements—what faithful and earnest remonstrances—what priceless benefits must be communicated to thousands during forty or fifty years!

When these things are contemplated, we cannot wonder that Paul exclaimed—"I magnify mine office." We cannot be surprised at his language, "For we are unto God a sweet savour of Christ, in them that are saved, and in them that perish: To the one we are the savour of death unto death, and to the other the savour of life unto life. And who is sufficient for these things?"—(2 Corinth. ii. 15, 16.)

"Is there not, then, a responsibility attached to the services of the pulpit, that might well make an angel tremble? O, who that duly reflects on the solemnity of such a calling must not be oppressed, if not overwhelmed! Nor is there any consolation in the midst of this fearful solicitude—no, not even from the promised presence of his Saviour—to the man who seeks not, labours not, prays not, thus to impress and penetrate the minds of those committed to his charge."

Let, therefore, all theological students, all young ministers, remember that they should particularly direct their minds, in all their studies and engagements, to that department of labour with which they will be pre-eminently and constantly occupied. They should make it their early and assiduous endeavour so to furnish the mind, so to discipline and prepare the heart, as that, by the Divine benediction, they may be qualified to become useful, acceptable, effective preachers of the Gospel. They are to be the expositors of God's truth. The instruction of the people in the doctrines and principles of Christianity is to be their main business. Multitudes will look up to them for a knowledge of the way of salvation—for guidance in the way to heaven—for the means of preservation in the midst of error, temptation, and sin; and they must be qualified to teach, direct, console, admonish, and, by the blessing of God, to bring them to Christ, and to glory.

Their great work, then, must be to prepare for the *public service of the sanctuary*; and they cannot be too well furnished for this arduous and sacred service. Students for the ministry, when you enter on the pastorate, remember that your great business must be to *feed the flock*: and you are to feed them with nothing but *Divine knowledge*, and with that knowledge you must be well supplied yourselves. "I will give you," said God, promising distinguished blessings to his ancient people, "pastors and teachers, according to mine heart, who shall feed you with knowledge and understanding."—(Jeremiah iii. 15.) Subordinate everything, therefore, to the work of preaching the Gospel—explaining, establishing, applying, and enforcing the truth of Christianity—that truth which is identified with the happiness and salvation of man.

Calmly and seriously weigh a few concise and pertinent counsels, to aid you in proclaiming the Gospel of Christ to sinners, that your ministry may be esteemed by the intelligent and pious, and be productive, through the agency of

the Spirit of God, of the most salutary and important effects on the hearts and consciences of all to whom you may be called to dispense the Word of life.

I. Preach the truth as you find it in the Word of God, especially in the New Testament.

This is most essential to your acceptance and success in the ministry. The Bible, and *nothing else*, is to be your standard—your directory—your book of instruction—your theological system—everything to you, in relation to your work in the pulpit. There you have nothing to do but confine yourselves to the unambiguous statements of the Scriptures. You are not to be “wise above what is written.” You are to seek after no novelties. You are to indulge no vagaries. You are to invent nothing—alter nothing—add nothing—subtract nothing. Your ministry is just to be an exposition of the truth. You will find all that you are commanded to preach in the Bible—and all that you need to proclaim for instruction and edification. All the doctrines you are to advance—all the precepts you are to inculcate—all the invitations, directions, and admonitions you are to offer—all the appeals you are to make—all the encouragements you are to impart—all the promises you are to apply—all the characters you are to delineate—you will find presented before you, ready for your use, for your enlightened and faithful application, in the Word of God. Your great principles are there. Your spiritual weapons are there. Your persuasive and urgent exhortations are there. Your rich consolations are there. Your mode of dealing both with saint and sinner is exhibited there.

Keep, then, as nearly as you can, to the Bible—to its clear, unvarnished, solemn, and impressive representations. The more you attend to this direction, the more interesting and effective will your preaching be. It will be appreciated—it will be honoured—it will be blest. Let your language be derived, in a great degree, from the Word of God. Let

your illustrations be drawn from the Scriptures. Let your appeals to the conscience, your inculcation and enforcement of great Christian subjects, have their principal beauty and weight given to them by their being, simply, a fervid employment of the expressions, and a warm and enlightened application of the truths of Scripture. Make yourselves, therefore, very familiar with the Bible, and especially with the pages of the New Testament; and be exceedingly anxious that its principles and spirit may be infused into your heart, that you may adhere closely to the letter and requirements of the Word of God, that there may be a correct interpretation given of the Christian system, that there may be no deviation from it,—but that all your intelligent and discriminating hearers may see that your preaching is only an amplification of revealed truth. No preaching is, or can be, useful, unless there be a simple and uniform adherence to the Scriptures, as the fountain of truth.

II. Be particular *in the selection of your subjects* for the pulpit.

It is of the utmost importance to attend to this direction, while pursuing your theological studies, and prosecuting your pulpit labours. You will find that much of your acceptance, your impression as ministers, your usefulness in the vineyard of the Lord, will depend on the subjects which you are accustomed to select for expansion and enforcement. You should pay marked attention to this point, that your subjects may be suitable, adapted to your mind and character, to your people, to their peculiar condition, necessities, experience.

Do not seek after *curious, novel, startling* subjects; subjects that will occasion remark, and sometimes even mirth, from their *singularity*, but which will not be calculated to raise you in the estimation of the devout, or to do good to your hearers.

Do not seek after *difficult* subjects—abstruse passages

of Scripture, on which you can advance but little, and which are selected by some only to construct a piece of philosophical and metaphysical argumentation, in order that their erudition and intellectual powers may be displayed, but which is almost perfectly useless to the people assembled, especially to the more uncultured portion of the audience.

In selecting your subjects for the pulpit, do not go from one theological writer to another, that you may be regularly supplied with a wide range of topics; but *seek the aid of the Holy Spirit*,—that you may be directed by him to those which are plain, serious, and impressive—those which are calculated to benefit, and, by the inculcation of which, God will be glorified, the sinner will be informed and impressed, and Christ will be exalted.

Always regard *the edification* of your people, when you are selecting subjects for the pulpit. What are those subjects they most need? what subjects will be most calculated to strike the mind—to convey truth to the heart—to produce a lasting impression? Adherence to this rule will uniformly guide you with wisdom and safety.

Ever *consult the Scriptures with prayer*. Be devotional readers of the Bible, and you will never be at a loss for subjects to expound and apply in your ministry. You will have themes ever furnished; principles ever brought home to you with power; and a multitude of texts opened to you *as you read*, all interesting, seasonable, profitable, on which you can dilate with pleasure and advantage.

Select your subjects *early in the week*,—that there may be no anxiety, no uncertainty, no confusion; and let the subjects on which you purpose to dwell, be well revolved in the mind, that your illustrations may be richer, fuller, clearer, and that your applications may be more significant and impressive.

“My mind,” said a distinguished minister, “was determined on keeping my eyes on the sacred Scriptures, night

and day ; and, by the Divine blessing, this has furnished me, for *thirty years*, with three sermons on the Lord's day, and twice on week evenings. And the more I read, preach, converse, and expound, the more amply I am filled with Divine truth : all my fears of wanting a text, or a subject, vanished, when I adopted this plan. Yet, such was my folly, and disposition to 'cleave to the dust,' that, the first funeral sermon I was called to preach, I flew to Dr. Bates's 'Sermon on Death.' I read it with attention and anxiety ; but, on my finishing it, felt myself weary, unhappy, disappointed. The thought occurred,—why not read the Book of Job, Psalms, the writings of Solomon, on the subject of death ? I did so, and was soon supplied with a text and a sermon. This cured my folly, and convinced me that the Word of God is 'able to make the man of God perfect,' or completely furnish him for his work."

III. Let your *sermons be well digested*.

Regard this as an obligation of commanding importance, which common sense—the character of your office—the claims of your people—a regard to your acceptance and usefulness, and the unqualified statements of the Word of God, require you to discharge. Never let the service of the sanctuary be performed with that which cost you nothing ; no thought—no inquiry—no research—no seasons of long and profound retirement—no patient and thorough investigation of the Word of God. Your discourses at all times, on all occasions, must be well studied—the result of careful reading—of intelligent and devout reflection. They must not be hasty, unpremeditated effusions,—vapid, commonplace, crude, superficial ; awakening no interest, and producing no impression.

It is stated by Cotton Mather, in his Life of the invaluable Elliot, that that devoted and honoured minister "liked no preaching, but what had been studied for ; and that he would very much commend a sermon which he could perceive had

required some good thinking, and reading, in the author of it. I have been present when he has said to a preacher, when he has walked home from the assembly with him, 'Brother, there was oil always required for the service of the sanctuary, but it must be *beaten* oil. I praise God that I saw your oil so *well beaten* to-day. The Lord help us always by good study to beat our oil, that there may be no knots in our sermons left *undissolved*, and that a *clear light* may be thereby given in the House of God.'"

"I should lay it down as a rule," observes Lord Brougham, "admitting of no exception, that a man will speak well, in proportion as he has written much; and that, with equal talents, he will be the finest *extempore* speaker, when no time for preparing is allowed, who has prepared himself the most sedulously, when he had an opportunity of delivering a premeditated speech. All the exceptions which I have ever heard cited to this principle are apparent ones only, proving nothing more than that some few men of rare genius have become great speakers without preparation; in no wise showing that, with preparation, they would not have reached a much higher pitch of excellence."

"Brougham is quite right," remarked Robert Hall, "preparation is everything. If asked, what is the chief requisite for eloquence? I should reply, 'Preparation;' and what the second? 'Preparation;' and the third? 'Preparation.' " Then, with a sigh, he observed—"If I had prepared more for the pulpit, I should have been a much better preacher. There are heights and depths, breadths and lengths in eloquence, yet to be attained, that we know nothing about."

You cannot, therefore, be too careful in preparing and composing your discourses. The more you study, and the more you write, provided that you do it with precision, the more will your mind be enriched, your powers invigorated, and your progress apparent. Your flock will perceive, by your language, your illustrations, your arrangement,

the character of your thoughts, your appeals to the judgment and the conscience, and the variety, freedom and animation marking your ministry, that you work hard, during the week, to benefit them on the Lord's day,—and they will value you; your ministrations will carry weight, and you will continually rise in the estimation of those whose minds are discriminating, and whose hearts are imbued with the love of Christ.

Lay it down, then, as an invariable rule, that the public services of a minister of the Gospel demand preparation—constant, untiring, unrelaxed preparation. You must have the mind well filled. You must weigh every sentiment you advance, and you must give your people the best you can produce. It is a most just observation, that “no vigour or vivacity of intellect, no colloquial powers, no social intercourse, can supply the defect of an uninteresting, monotonous, jejune pulpit.” If you wish to honour God, to instruct and benefit your flock, to secure and increase impression, you must diligently prepare for your public engagements, and mentally, as well as devotionally, digest all the sermons you deliver, that every one may inform the judgment, penetrate and influence the heart.

IV. *Attend to arrangement in your sermons.*

Never be indifferent to method. There are some ministers who preach without any plan, any marked division. “They despise all plans, and pretend to regard only power.” We by no means recommend you, in entering on your regular engagements, to imitate them in this respect. It is important to have a well-arranged outline; to have your subject and design distinctly and broadly defined. It is a considerable aid to the memory of the preacher himself; and sure we are that it materially aids the hearers of the Gospel in remembering the discourses which are delivered, and in calling to recollection the trains of thought and illustration which have been pursued.

Let the division of your discourses be tersely expressed. Carefully avoid all verboseness and circumlocution, and let the arrangement of your sermons be simple, luminous, neat, and varied. In addition, let it be as textual as possible. A good plan of a sermon is exceedingly valuable. It is of importance both in composition and preaching. When an outline is drawn up, principles deduced from the passage contemplated in a natural, concise, yet comprehensive manner, a minister finds that his labour, both in writing his discourses fully out, and in their delivery, is greatly facilitated.

There is one thing against which you must particularly guard,—too great a multiplication of subordinate heads. When subdivisions are too numerous and minute, a discourse is complicated and confused. The memory, instead of being aided, can retain but little. Besides, when a sermon is so unnecessarily subdivided, it is injudiciously broken up, continuity of thought is impaired, and the effect of the whole is weakened.

We counsel all young ministers, in preparing for the pulpit, to make it a matter of importance, indeed, the utmost importance, that their discourses be well arranged—the various and leading thoughts well distributed, and obviously deducible from the passages of Scripture selected. It will materially conduce to the acceptance and usefulness of their ministry, will impart pleasure to the hearers, and be of considerable service in enabling them to remember what is presented before them.

“In forming a plan,” observes a most useful minister, the late Rev. John Cooke, “although I should accidentally follow another person, yet, *intentionally*, I would follow none. I ask myself questions on the subject, and, after obtaining the principal ideas in it, form two or three leading and including propositions, and, such as they are, they are my own. If God lays a subject on the heart, pours an unction on the spirit, and we attend to its openings, I do

not think we shall be at a loss for ideas, plan, or anything necessary to form a useful discourse. To me, one thing has appeared very important, namely, that when or wheresoever a train of good or useful thoughts occur to my mind, on a subject or text, I take my pen or pencil, and sketch them on paper, even if it happen on Lord's-day evening, or at a friend's house when on a visit. 'They who wait upon the Lord shall renew their strength.'"

V. Let your sermons be *your own*.

Do not beg, borrow, or steal. Do not use crutches. Do not be dependant on the thoughts and expressions of other men. Your discourses must originate *from yourselves*—from your own minds and hearts, and not from your memories only, or from your book-shelves. Nothing is so mean and unworthy as to take portions of one discourse and another, from the writings of distinguished divines, with which to patch up your sermons. Nothing is so ruinous to the mind—to anything like manly, vigorous, independent thought and effort. Nothing is more degrading to a young minister. It will infallibly deteriorate his character, and prove most detrimental to his official services. Besides, the habit will grow continually, until he cannot preach at all without extracting sentences from one, and passages from another writer of popular discourses. And in how many instances will the plagiarist be detected, exposed, and derided, till, perhaps, no confidence will be reposed in him. The remark will often be made, after hearing him—"We know not whether he has been delivering one of his own sermons, or giving us the thoughts and language of others." Now, what weight will such a ministry command?—what influence, what power will such a ministry exert?—what respectability can the character of such a ministry secure? Unquestionably, nothing which a young minister, of the slightest manliness and independence of mind, would at all desire to realise.

We would earnestly admonish every young minister to avoid, in preaching, or preparing for the pulpit, being the mere *compiler*, or *copyist*. It is drudgery, indeed, and servile work. It is unworthy of any enlightened and holy preacher of the Word of Life, and he will regard it with disdain. "Combine," as has been justly remarked by an admirable judge and example of pulpit eloquence, "in your own intellectual and religious character, as many of the excellences of others as you can, and make them your own. Read and study men and books with a constant regard to practical utility; but, in the midst of all, preserve your own identity, and do not condescend to be the mere imitator, the echo, or the shadow of any one."

Let all the exercises of your mind, for the pulpit, be, at once, as vigorous and as original as possible. Imitate none. Borrow from none. Rely on none. Sit down to study your sermons, in the first instance, with your Bible and your Concordance only. Sketch your plan, and fill it up, as the Lord enables you, with those ideas and illustrations which are suggested by your own mind, well stored and cultured, vigorously and devoutly exercised; and, be assured of this, if the mind has been properly disciplined—if it develop any excellences at all—you will produce something interesting and useful.

If, however, having selected a text, you go to one commentator after another, extracting a passage from this author, and a passage from that, what will your discourses be worth? How can you expect to make any progress? How can you rise in public estimation? Indeed, how can you maintain your position at all? Besides, will not the ministry be a work of perfect drudgery, and will not your own character be intellectually and morally degraded?

An enlightened minister wrote to a ministerial friend, who was in the habit of preaching other men's discourses, in the following terms:—"I should very much like to hear one of *your own* sermons. To preach, or read, other men's

sermons, under pretence of preaching from notes, must subject you to the reproach of idleness, of vanity, of hypocrisy, and of being a servile retailer. Some hearers, who are also *readers*, exclaim, 'Alas, master, it was borrowed.' By such hypocritical servility you 'neglect the gift that is your own,' depend on 'an arm of flesh,' and 'your heart departeth from the Lord.' You seek a message from *man*, rather than from God; and have reason to exclaim, 'my leanness! my leanness!' And, to my knowledge, the most experienced Christians among your hearers are uttering the same complaint. I knew a minister who followed your plan, until he read Matthew Henry's Comment in the pulpit. As your best hearers have found you out, 'be sure your *sin* will find you out,' in a barren ministry, and alienated hearers. You receive, as you ask, the free thoughts of your affectionate brother."

VI. Compose your discourses under the *influence of a devotional frame of mind*.

There are periods in the history of every Christian and minister, when the heart is peculiarly susceptible of Divine impressions, and when those impressions are deep and powerful. There are seasons when the devout emotions are lively and elevated; when the soul seems to be full of love to Christ; when the spirit is unusually tender and humble; when spiritual exercises are much delighted in; and when the powers of the world to come are vividly felt and realised. These are seasons which cannot be too ardently desired, or too highly valued by a minister of the Gospel; seasons which he cannot too promptly and sedulously improve. It is at such periods as these that he should sit down and compose his discourses, exercising simple reliance on the agency of the Spirit of God.

It was an admirable direction, given by an experienced and holy minister to another,—“Observe the wind and tide in your favour. You will sometimes find a stream of truth

running into your soul when you least expect it, and a contrary wind, when you wish to push forward. I have received such gracious influences, and openings of Divine truth, on a Monday, when my body has been exhausted, which have fixed me in my study, until I have arranged half-a-dozen sermons. And, even on a Sabbath evening, when a text has been unfolded to me, I have studied a sermon with speed and pleasure. The flesh has been weary, but my spirit has obeyed the heavenly vision."

It is obvious, that discourses for the pulpit are the most serious things in the world, as well as the most important, and they cannot, therefore, be prepared under the influence of too serious and holy a frame of mind. Unless they are prepared in this manner, there can be no unction, no power, no blessing. They will be mere negations. There will be nothing direct, impressive, penetrating.

Now, it is apparent, that there are seasons when the most solemn, devout, and holy feelings take possession of the heart, absorbing the soul; these, then, are the seasons for preparing, with pleasure and effect, your pulpit addresses. Are there not times, too, when the light of heaven beams with singular radiance on the Word of God? You see a beauty, a surpassing loveliness in it, which you did not perceive before; you appreciate its excellence with unusual intelligence, discrimination, and fervour, and rejoice in its fulness, grandeur, and glory. Now these are the periods for composing your discourses. If prepared at such seasons, there will be an insight into the mind of the Spirit of God—there will be a freshness, a vitality, a significance, a richness about them, which will strike yourselves, and, when delivered, will interest and benefit the mass of your hearers. It was at such periods, and in such happy and heavenly frames as these, that Watts and Doddridge—Baxter and Flavel—Leighton and Manton—composed and delivered their sermons. Those discourses seem to be *steeped* in devotion. They are baptised into

the very spirit of heaven. We cannot wonder, then, at the interest they awakened—at the impression they produced; or that they are read by the church, through every succeeding generation, with increasing advantage and delight.

Let your discourses be composed *after prayer*, and in the *real spirit* of prayer. You will find this habit to be unspeakably beneficial. It will impart a simplicity, a sweetness, a tenderness, a solemnity, a fervour, an elevation of sentiment, to your sermons, which they will never develop, if this habit be neglected—be coldly or partially maintained. The reason why so many discourses are cold and unimpressive, is because they have been arranged, composed, and delivered, in a spirit of comparative indifference to the exercise of prayer. “Pray without ceasing,” while you are preparing and delivering your sermons, and they must possess some excellent qualities—they will not be tame and lifeless.

VII. *Do not read your sermons.*

This is a habit formed by many, and especially by many young ministers at the present period; but we would by no means recommend it. If adopted, we consider that you would *regret* its adoption, and find it detrimental to the power and effect of your ministry. We are aware, that by reading your discourses, after their careful composition, greater precision and finish of style may be discovered; still, how much is sacrificed, how much is lost! The vivacity of the pulpit is, to a great extent, impaired. The life—the animation—the spontaneous and buoyant energy of preaching,—which render it so interesting and attractive, and give to it so much power, are, in a great degree, taken away. A stiff, formal, and mechanical manner is also acquired, which those who invariably read their sermons find it difficult, indeed almost impossible, to shake off.

Besides, we have invariably observed, especially among dissenting congregations, accustomed to a free delivery in

the pulpit, and the unrestricted preaching of the Gospel, that sermons, however excellent and able in themselves, when read, are listened to by the majority with comparative inattention, and fall on the ears of numbers who remain listless and apathetic. If Whitfield had read his sermons, what effect would they have produced? Should we have heard of the power, of the extraordinary success of his ministry? Unquestionably not! The vivacity and energy of his manner—the power of his utterance—the lightning of his eye—the almost celestial radiance illuminating his countenance—the inimitable pathos and tenderness which he poured forth, while descanting on the love of Christ, and beseeching sinners to come to him—would have been lost.

It must be remembered, too, that we have *few good readers*. It is *rare* to hear a discourse read from the pulpit *well*—with freedom, animation, and effect; in that natural and vivacious manner which is calculated to produce a pleasing and a general impression.

Commence your ministry, then, by avoiding the practice of *reading* your sermons. Never read a discourse, except on some occasion of *special significance*, and, even then, avoid it if you possibly can. Sure we are that it will be connected with the freedom, acceptance, and efficiency of your ministry more than you are aware. The most enlightened judges, the most devout in our congregations, coincide in the observation, that one of the great charms of the Nonconformist pulpit is, that discourses are *preached*, not read—that the minister does not confine himself to his manuscript, but that he preaches the Word of God—delivers the message of heaven to the people, with persuasiveness and animation—presents the truth before them in an easy, unembarrassed, unfettered manner.

We have no objection, confessedly, to the employment of notes in the pulpit; it may be, copious. Some find it difficult to preach, connectedly and comfortably, without

their use. Still, if employed, as has been beautifully remarked—"They should be like a quiver, on which a minister casts his eye, now and then, to perceive what arrow is to be fetched from thence, and shot in earnest."

Young ministers should endeavour to preach *without* notes. They often trammel and embarrass. "I once used notes," observed a distinguished preacher, "but found *my memory, upon trial*, served me best. The subject is laid nearer my heart—I think I feel more dependance on the Spirit—my own soul enjoys more—I am more unconfined—and any part of the subject more readily occurs to me *another time*, when I need it. It requires a little more pains to fix it in the memory; but amply, very amply, does it repay for diligence."

Our recommendation is in unison with the above remark, conceiving it to be sound and important. Get the leading thoughts of your discourses—the general outline—the prominent illustrations—well imprinted on the memory, "infixd in the mind;"—enter the pulpit, after long and deep reflection, under the influence of a devout and holy frame of mind, committing yourselves to the great work to which you are devoted, of unfolding the Gospel, and beseeching men to be reconciled with God, and you will find that the Lord Jesus will assist you—that He will be better to you than all your anxieties and fears. Thought will succeed thought—illustration will follow illustration—there will be no deficiency of suitable and expressive phraseology—and you will give the appropriate intonations to your words and sentences, regulated by the natural and fervid feeling you are cherishing; and thus, we are persuaded, your ministrations will be rendered far more effective than they would be, were your sermons uniformly read.

We deem this counsel worthy of pre-eminent regard, by young ministers among the Nonconformists, at the present period especially.

VIII. Let your preaching be marked by its *evangelical character*, and, especially, by its exhibition of *Christ crucified*.

Your sermons, if you wish to glorify the Saviour, and your ministrations to be accompanied with power, must be *full of the Gospel*; be characterised by their lucid, undisguised, uniform statement of the great points of the Christian system; those which distinguish it from every other system of religion; those which impart to it so much elevation and grandeur; those which clothe it with peculiar fascinations, and which attach to it undefinable importance. The prominent doctrines of the Word of Life must be the prominent topics of your ministry. The universal depravity of man; the sovereign and everlasting love of God to secure his recovery; the interposition of the Lord Jesus on his behalf; the Divinity of the Saviour's person; the perfection of His work; the propitiatory character of His sufferings; the design and efficacy of His death; the acceptance of His sacrifice; the perpetuity of His intercession; justification by His grace; regeneration by His spirit; pardon through His blood; the blessedness of heaven, eventually, in consequence of an interest in His mercy; the necessity of living to His service, and for the advancement of His glory; must be the uniform and vital subjects which you unfold and enforce.

Your ministry will want its *distinctive character* without them; for should it not be your marked and continual object to cry, "Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sins of the world?"

Your ministry will want its *highest beauty* without them; for they lend to it an attraction, a charm, a glory, which no other themes can impart.

Your ministry will want its *power*, its *efficiency*, without them. You will preach without light being communicated to the dark; without health being imparted to the diseased; without purity being conveyed to the defiled; without

forgiveness being enjoyed by the guilty ; without life being bestowed on the dead.

The apostolic ministry was marked by its purely evangelic character, and hence the influence which it exerted, the power which it commanded, the remarkable blessing with which it was associated. This was its decisive stamp—its broad and beautiful impress—its most striking exhibition. It was a continual recurrence to the Saviour ; a full development of the beauty, the grace, the condescension, the glory of the Saviour. The apostles went everywhere preaching Christ. Whether they visited Philippi, Thessalonica, Berea, Samaria, Athens, Corinth, Jerusalem, or Rome, Christ Jesus, in the Divinity of his person—in the dignity of his mediatorial character—in the grandeur of his work—in the virtue of his atoning sacrifice—in the wonders of his love—in the fulness of his grace—in the prevalence and unchangeableness of his intercession—was constantly unfolded. The apostles made everything bear on the Saviour. All their doctrinal statements—all their invitations—all their warnings—all their directions—all their appeals—all their encouragements—all their reproofs. Even in reference to the most subordinate themes, there was generally some broad and beautiful allusion to the Redeemer. “Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it.”—(Ephesians v. 25.) “Servants, be obedient to them that are your masters according to the flesh, with fear and trembling, in singleness of your heart, as unto Christ. Not with eye-service, as men pleasers, but as the servants of Christ, doing the will of God from the heart.”—(Ephesians vi. 5, 6.) And if Christ were preached, if Christ were exalted, if “the savour of his knowledge” were diffused, they rejoiced, “yea, and would rejoice.”

Let this, then, be the impress of your ministry—its *most distinctive feature*. Let it be *full of Christ*. Let the Saviour be “the diamond in the bosom of all your sermons.”

Indeed, to honour God—to edify the church—to bring wanderers into the fold of the Good Shepherd—to train your people for the glory of heaven—this must be the characteristic, the charm, the life, the crown of your preaching, at all times.

It is stated, with regard to Dr. Edward Williams, that “he turned with *holy loathing* from that ministry which veils the superlative glories of the Redeemer in general representations, and studied ambiguity.”* So it is with every person who values the Saviour, and who is supremely anxious for the extension of his kingdom, and the advancement of his glory.

IX. In your preaching, *uniformly aim at simplicity.*

Nothing is more desirable, nothing is more necessary, at the outset, and during the whole of your ministerial career. “The *grand characteristic* of the Gospel orator,” John Newton observes, “is simplicity.” This is to be his marked, crowning, unvarying feature. When a minister of Christ enters the pulpit, he will not attempt, if love to souls warm his heart, to utter fine things, but to exhibit great truths in a plain manner. Cowper remarks, with his usual wisdom and piety,

“ I seek divine simplicity in him
Who handles things Divine.”

And it is obvious, to every person of correct thought and devout feeling, that if a public teacher be plain in his mode of expression—simple in his illustrations—and perspicuous and luminous in his style of thinking, anywhere, or under any circumstances, this beautiful and transparent simplicity ought to be discovered in *the pulpit*.

The great business of a Gospel minister is to preach the truth, so that *all* may understand what he advances, and be

* Vide Gilbert’s Life of Williams. A most able ministerial portraiture; one of exceeding value to the rising ministry.

sensible of the force and conclusiveness of the principles which he lays down, of the assertions and appeals which he makes, of the illustrations which he furnishes. The object of a truly estimable and devoted minister and pastor is not to be admired as the finished gentleman, as the man of classic taste, as an orator of consummate beauty and power, or as a profound and vigorous thinker. His devout and unceasing solicitude will be to expound the Gospel with "simplicity and godly sincerity"—to "pour a stream of radiance" on the doctrines—directions—requirements—encouragements, and admonitions of the inspired volume, that his audience may perceive the beauty, appreciate the value, and feel the commanding importance of "the truth as it is in Jesus."

Everything associated with the Christian ministry is of such ineffable magnitude and moment that the utmost plainness is *absolutely requisite*. The slightest mistakes or errors on the part of the people may prove so hazardous and pernicious; the period of human probation is so short and uncertain; the heedlessness discovered, in relation to "the greatest of all great things," is so general; and numbers of mankind are involved in ignorance so profound and entire, respecting the sublime and vital announcements of Christianity; that, unless a minister be plain in the pulpit—unless he endeavour to explain the truth of God to the weakest and narrowest capacity, he is chargeable with a serious dereliction of duty—he is acting most unwisely and improperly—he is trifling with the dearest, the immortal interests of man; thus he dishonours his Master—leaves unfulfilled the great business of his sacred office—opens a wide door for remark and censure, and fails in accomplishing those momentous ends, to secure which the Gospel ministry has been instituted.

Plain sermons are what the hearers of the Word most require—not elaborate, showy, "gaudy nothings." Intelligence, taste, fancy, argument, vigorous and splendid intellect, are all of importance in "the sacred desk," and every

discriminating judge will value them highly; still, the minister of Christ must show his flock that it is not his supreme desire to exhibit mind, but to make all things revealed in the Gospel, connected with the salvation of man, as plain as possible; and there is not a little learning and ability required, to present truth with simplicity, and in all its variety, before the people. Fine, useful thoughts, not finely, but plainly and energetically expressed, uniformly characterise the pulpit efforts of our best preachers; and this, unquestionably, is the great secret of their popularity and usefulness. And if ministers wish to produce a powerful and an indelible impression on the minds and hearts of their auditories, they must cultivate, most assiduously, the habit of speaking plainly to the people.

We would, then, most earnestly counsel young ministers to aim invariably in their preaching at a chaste, unaffected, manly simplicity. Let there be no tinsel—no parade—no glitter—no unnecessary and meretricious ornament. Let language be plain, not bald; let illustrations be clear as the running stream; let style be unpretending, obvious, and sometimes even colloquial, in a certain degree, without improperly descending—for we advocate no vulgarity—in order that your congregations may more sensibly feel what you proclaim to them; and let great simplicity and artlessness of thought be rigidly studied, else sermons, however accurate, philosophical, argumentative, and elaborate, will not tell powerfully on the heart and conscience.

“I never heard my valued minister to greater advantage,” remarked a discriminating and excellent hearer to the writer, recently, “than when he was obliged to preach unexpectedly. He had little opportunity for preparation—no time for elaborate study, and I never enjoyed a sermon more in my life—it was so plain and unaffected. It made me feel, because I knew that what my minister said was expressed as he felt it—there was simplicity of thought, feeling, and language.”

Thus we have frequently heard it observed that ministers are rarely so acceptable among their own people as on the week-day evenings, when their discourses are generally more simple and unpretending, and less laboured. All this shows the necessity of aiming continually at simplicity, in order that ministerial efforts in the pulpit may not prove nugatory, and, to a great extent, useless. It is affecting—indeed, to a benevolent mind, almost overwhelming—to think that the poorest or most unlettered person in any of our congregations should depart from the house of God, observing, “that the minister was quite beyond his comprehension.”

“The common people”—those who enjoyed few literary and intellectual advantages as well as secular resources—heard Jesus Christ “gladly,” because he spake *plainly* to them, and, indeed, to all. There was a sweet and winning simplicity in his discourses, which powerfully and resistlessly attracted them, and produced a deep impression. Why should any ministers, and, especially, any just entering on pastoral duties, consider it a mark of folly or degradation to imitate “Him who spake as never man spake?” How it would rejoice our heart, if the views of all our young ministers, on preaching, corresponded with the sentiments of the following passage:—

“Were I called upon to express, in one word, the *most important* requisite in those discourses designed to produce a powerful effect, equally on the judgment and the passions, I would say, that word is *simplicity*—without it nothing can be distinctly perceived—nothing can be deeply felt. The thoughts presented are encompassed by a mist. Their real shape and magnitude, and colouring, and other properties, are not known and understood; it is, therefore, absurd to expect, that the view of them should make any either correct or strong impressions.”

Elegant simplicity in an oration, on any subject, is one of its most fascinating charms; and this is the case, especially,

with all pulpit compositions. They never shine out so clearly, command such attention, or produce so strong an effect, as when a chaste, manly, dignified simplicity pervades and beautifies them.

It has been observed, by one of almost obsolete name and memory, who yet could pen a good thought,

“ Plainness in the parlour warms,
But plainness in the pulpit charms.”

Uniformly remember, then, as preachers of the Gospel, that nothing will be lost, but everything *truly valuable* gained, by your preserving, at all times, unstudied and unborrowed simplicity;—it imparts an attraction to all intellectual and public efforts, which nothing else can communicate.

“ O, sister meek of Truth,
To my admiring youth
Thy sober aid, and native charms, infuse !
The flowers that sweetest breathe,
Though beauty culled the wreath,
Still ask thy hand to raise their ordered hues !” *

X. Have little in your discourses that is controversial.

There is no necessity for the frequent introduction of controversial themes. Be intelligent, argumentative, discriminating—appeal uniformly to the understandings, as well as to the hearts, of your hearers—still, let it be your studious endeavour to avoid those speculative and thorny subjects which would lead to disputation, and occasion, in many instances, angry and painful feelings. The remark of Dr. Watts is perfectly correct—“Religious controversies frequently introduced, without *real necessity*, have an unhappy tendency to hurt the spirit of true godliness, both in the hearts of preachers and hearers.” Those ministers who are controversial in their style of preaching are generally cold, dry, critical, and, to the majority of their audiences, unpro-

* Collins.

fitable and unimpressive; and in congregations where a love of controversy has been awakened, an undesirable spirit is not rarely discovered—a fondness for disputation becomes observable—a craving after what is merely discussional grows—an absence of the temper of Christian amenity and love, very often a dearth of vital godliness, ensues.

Let it be a rule with you—a *prominent* rule to govern your ministry, that you dwell on the simplest and most momentous points of Christianity. There is an ample variety for your pulpit exercises in connexion with the great subjects of the Gospel; those which lie at the foundation of human happiness; those which are identified with the moral dignity and salvation of all your hearers. Fix on these. Elucidate these. Inculcate these. Apply these. Exhibit the importance of these. Enforce the necessity of immediate attention to these.

It is stated, with regard to the great Howe, that, “though he is quite at home in the profoundest speculations of theology, he seldom long loses sight of the *elementary principles* of the Gospel. On these he *best loves* to expatiate, and to these he perpetually returns. Even in those pieces which were intended more particularly for the initiated—for those who had already crossed the threshold of the temple—he never fails to remind them of the terms on which they first sought and found admittance, and to inculcate, as the indispensable condition of all progress in the Divine life, an habitual recollection of the *cardinal doctrines* of the Gospel. I scarcely know any discourse of his, however circumscribed the topic of which it treats, or however special the occasion which produced it, which does not contain a full, clear, distinct recognition of those fundamental principles on which rests the whole superstructure of evangelical truth.” — “It is evident, indeed, that he habitually considered the knowledge of religious truth as totally worthless, if not subservient to holiness and virtue. He did not look upon religion,” says Calamy, “as a system

of opinions, or a set of forms, so much as a *Divine discipline* to reform the heart and life." *

"Admit not"—observed the distinguished Milner, of Queen's College, Cambridge, in writing to a clerical friend—"Admit not *one particle* of controversial divinity into your discourses; and if, through God's blessing, the Gospel lay hold of the hearts of your hearers, it will effect all that you can wish, and that most satisfactorily. It is better to leave niceties and abstruse speculations, and to keep to the simple, broad truths and statements of Scripture."

This is sound and valuable advice; and young ministers may rest assured, the more simply and uniformly they adhere to the great points of Christianity—those which are so clearly and broadly defined, and respecting which, on the part of the mass of those who hear and appreciate the Gospel, there is no material diversity of opinion—the more acceptable will be their ministry, and decidedly the more useful and impressive will be the character and effect of their preaching. A pulpit which is merely didactic, discussional, controversial, is a pulpit, to the generality of hearers, cold and flat, without life, beauty, and spiritual power.

XI. Abound in expository preaching, and let your discourses be enriched by quotations from Scripture.

There is no style of preaching which, if intelligently and devoutly conducted, will be more instructive and beneficial to your hearers. Their attention will be secured; their views of Divine truth will be enlarged and rendered more discriminating; their acquaintance with the Word of God will be more systematic and concentrated. They will not fix, as so many do, on *detached* passages of Scripture, without any regard to the context, giving to them a sense which the inspired writers never intended to convey. A con-

* Vide Rogers's Life of Howe, pp. 478, 479. A biography of peculiar elegance and beauty.

siderable number and variety of subjects will be brought under their attention, which do not occupy the minds of congregations differently taught and trained by their ministers; they will be, by no means, so loose and vacillating in their theological sentiments, as those where no connected and expository course of scriptural instruction has been pursued, for their edification and establishment in the faith. The young, especially, and those who are anxiously inquiring into the meaning and scope of important passages, chapters, and books of the Bible, will derive incalculable benefit from such a mode of pulpit instruction.

Besides, it will be of inestimable advantage to *yourselves* as preachers of the Word. Your examination of the Scriptures must be more enlarged, systematic, discriminating, and profound. Your reading must be steadily pursued, and be varied and extensive. You will have to gain collateral helps from every quarter, by which your acquaintance with the Bible will be increased—with its characters, histories, incidents, countries, imagery, illustrations, and phraseology. By the habit, also, of studying the *original* languages of the Scriptures, your minds will be materially benefited; greater clearness and expansion will be given to your views, and the intellectual powers will be generally invigorated.

We have often heard it objected to expository preaching that it is dull; that the attention of the audience is not maintained; that interest, sufficiently deep and powerful, is not awakened. This, however, we consider to be the fault of the preacher. If passages for exposition be judiciously selected; if a due regard for variety be discovered; if minute, verbal criticism be not indulged; if tediousness be avoided; if the practice of “wire-drawing” be carefully shunned; if great principles are brought forward; if the practical applications and appeals have sufficient boldness and prominence given to them; and if an animated and pleasing style of address be adopted, we are persuaded that

the expository mode of instruction may be rendered peculiarly and increasingly interesting to a congregation, and that they will almost *prefer* it to every other. And, in the Word of God, what a field for the selection of topics is presented before you! what characters to portray! what countries to describe! what narratives to delineate! what facts to relate, and on which to dwell! what images to illustrate, and the lessons taught by them to unfold! what impressive and spirit-stirring events on which to expatiate! what principles to embody and apply!

Commence your ministry, then, by adopting the expository mode of preaching. You will, be assured, have no reason to regret it. Let the Sabbath mornings be generally devoted to this most instructive part of your pulpit engagements; and let the range of your subjects be as varied and as interesting as possible. The history of our Lord will supply one of the finest and most attractive series of subjects with which to begin, and it will always afford, if well conducted, pleasure and edification to an intelligent and devout assembly. See, however, that your minds are well furnished; that you are largely and accurately acquainted with the meaning and scope of the Word of God; and that you are amply prepared, prior to delivering any expository discourses.

Still, if you do not excel in expository preaching, or fear that it is not the style of address most adapted to you, and in pursuing which you would be most happy, let your preaching be invariably marked by its *purely scriptural* character and tone; let your illustrations be derived largely from the Word of God—and let Scripture incidents and examples be frequently adduced which are apposite and striking; they will prove very effective. Be sure to have your sermons enriched by *Scripture quotations*, aptly selected, and pertinently applied. These, if properly introduced, give great beauty to a discourse. They are, also, very powerful often in their effect. They are like “apples of

gold, in net-work of silver." They rivet the attention, and produce deep impression.

It is stated, with regard to that distinguished minister, the Rev. Jehoida Brewer, of Birmingham, that his manner of expounding the Scriptures was very instructive and useful. His general style of preaching was that which, by way of distinction and eminence, has been called *scriptural*, because it embodies so large a portion of the sentiment and language of the Word of God. This peculiar character of his preaching Mr. Brewer attributed, in a great degree, to the remark of Edmund Jones, an eminently pious and venerable minister of the Gospel in Wales, who, after hearing his young friend preach, said to him, when he came down from the pulpit, "*Young man, I love to hear the sound of Scripture in a sermon.*" It was "a word in season," and he never forgot it. "It did me more good," observed Mr. Brewer, "than all my studies."

Let all your audiences *hear the sound of Scripture* in your discourses. Let the pious in the assembly never have occasion to make the remark—"It is quite a novelty to have a striking passage of the Bible introduced into a sermon." We entreat you to let your discourses *abound* in the phraseology, and be richly imbued with the spirit of the Word of God. It will impart to them, and, especially, to your sermons, as *young* ministers, great additional interest and beauty; for, "To say nothing of the inimitable beauties of the Bible, considered in a literary view, which are universally acknowledged, it is the book which every devout man is accustomed to consult as the oracle of God; it is the companion of his best moments, and the vehicle of his strongest consolations. Intimately associated in his mind with everything dear and valuable, its diction more powerfully excites devotional feelings than any other; and, when temperately and soberly used, imparts an unction to a religious discourse which nothing else can supply."—"For devotional impression, we conceive that a very considerable tincture of the

language of the Scriptures, or, at least, such a colouring as shall discover an intimate acquaintance with those inimitable models, will generally succeed best." *

XII. Let your preaching be *experimental*.

Not experimental, to the exclusion of what is strictly doctrinal or practical; but, whatever your subject, whatever the occasion on which your ministry is exercised, let it be apparent that what you advance is *the result of experience*; that you are not descanting on themes with which you are unacquainted, or acquainted only as matters of speculation and discussion, which come before you in the course of professional duty; but let it be obvious that you have "*tasted*" that the Lord is gracious—that "you have seen with your eyes, and that your hands have handled the Word of Life."

When preaching is experimental in its character, it is peculiarly interesting to *a devout audience*. They enjoy it exceedingly. It fixes their attention—secures their edification—benefits their hearts. And such preaching comes with power to *the generality of hearers*. They can see that the minister is not preaching from memory—merely reciting before them; that he is not performing his engagements in a cold, dry, perfunctory manner, as though all advanced by him were either "a task, or a fable;" and hence there is impressiveness associated with such a ministry.

Besides, when ministers preach experimentally, how pleasant it is to themselves! When out of the fulness of the heart the mouth speaks; when the subjects on which they dilate are appreciated by themselves; when the sentiments which they utter are connected with deep emotions; when they can say, to the truly pious in their congregations, "O, magnify the Lord with *us*, and let us exalt his name together!"—(Psalm xxxiv.)

How superior, in the judgment at least of the more devout, and for all the great ends of the ministry, is an

* Robert Hall.

experimental style of preaching to that which is merely intellectual—essay-like! It may be argumentative, philosophical, abounding in large and enlightened views, in beautiful displays of thought and expression, still, if there be no heart put into it—if it be seen that the minister preaches what he does not understand by experience, what he does not appreciate and feel himself, what interest is awakened? what spiritual benefit is reaped? what power on the hearts of the people is realised?

We would earnestly counsel young ministers to aim at an experimental style of preaching. It will materially subserve their acceptance and usefulness. It is connected with much simplicity of expression—with much artlessness of thought and arrangement—with peculiar tenderness and unction; in a word, it is, to a great extent, the utterance of the heart; and, consequently, when heart speaks to heart, there must be attention excited, and advantage conferred. There is nothing against which young ministers should more guard in the pulpit than a cold, formal, mechanical style and mode of address. Be assured of this, that mechanical preachers form mechanical hearers. Those who may be said to have the letter of their office, without experiencing its spirit and its power, will do no good to sinners, to immortal souls. Their ingenuity, their arrangement, their eloquence may be admired; but their discourses, whatever the ability they discover, or the superior manner in which they are pronounced, are only “as a lovely song.” Such preachers only resemble “one who plays skilfully on an instrument:” the taste may be gratified; the imagination awakened and delighted; the passions stirred; the judgment informed; the intellect raised and expanded; still, the consciences of sinners will sleep, and sleep on; their hearts will be unimpressed, unsubdued, unsanctified.

XIII. Cultivate in the pulpit a persuasive and an earnest mode of address.

Paul said to the Corinthians (2nd Epistle, v. 11), "knowing, therefore, the terror of the Lord, we *persuade* men ;" and, as the ministers of Christ, as the preachers of the Word, you must do likewise. All your learning—all your ability—all your tender and powerful emotions—all your acquaintance with language—all your knowledge of human nature—all the physical and mental energies you may command—must be employed—must be put into requisition—in order that you may *persuade* your hearers to receive Christ—to make instant application to him for mercy—to draw near to God, at once, that they may obtain life and salvation—to rise above the world—to prepare vigorously, and without delay, for a nobler state of being. All the arts of persuasion must be used by you, to win souls to Christ—to allure them to the cross—to induce them to seek after the bliss and glory of Paradise.

A persuasive, tender mode of address in the pulpit is of the utmost importance. It often produces an instantaneous and an abiding impression. It is not the hard, stern, unyielding manner which does good to souls, but speaking the truth with persuasiveness and love. Cultivate, then, a tone of deep and exquisite tenderness, when recurring to the love of Christ—the value of the salvation of the Gospel—the folly, guilt, and madness of men in rejecting the overtures of Divine mercy. Let your souls unfold all their sensibilities—all the depth and fulness of their affections, while "beseeching men to be reconciled to God." Resemble the great apostle of the Gentiles. Addressing the Philippians, 1st chapter, 8th verse, he most affectionately says—"For God is my record, how greatly I *long after* you all in the bowels of Jesus Christ." In writing to the Thessalonians, 1st Epistle, 2nd chapter, 7th and 8th verses, he remarks—"But we were gentle among you, even as a nurse cherisheth her (own) children: So, being affectionately desirous of you, we were willing to have imparted to you, not the Gospel of God only, but also our own souls, because you were dear

unto us." And he communicates to the Philippian believers for their admonition—"For many walk, of whom I have told you often, and now tell you *even weeping*, that they are the enemies of the cross of Christ." This is the preaching to do good. This is the persuasive manner which we are so anxious that every minister, and especially every young minister, should adopt. *Your heart* must be put into your sermons. There must be a pouring forth of the soul in all your public prayers, in all your pulpit efforts. If there be blended dignity and tenderness characterising your appeals and remonstrances, a most powerful impression will be produced on the minds of your audience. The most callous hearts will feel, and even the most unyielding spirits will often be subdued, by a persuasive fervour of manner, so beautifully unfolded, and by a compassionateness so generous and so pure.

The amiable and lovely Legh Richmond thus sweetly expressed himself:—"I claim no praise as a preacher but that of *being in earnest*, and when I open the counsel of God to a congregation, I hope I feel anxious for the welfare of my hearers, and really desirous that they should, for their own sakes, 'mark, learn, hear, and inwardly digest' the Holy Scriptures, when explained according to the principles of sound orthodoxy and evangelical truth; and thus, considering sound truth as the matter, and pastoral anxiety as the manner of my preaching, I hope to steer clear of any personal vanity or silly presumption in the arts of human eloquence, either written or oratorical. I have no wish to be a popular preacher in any sense but one, namely, as a *preacher to the hearts of the people*."*

The preaching of the sainted Dr. Waugh was exceedingly persuasive. His forte lay in speaking to the heart. He spake to his people as he felt, and always in love. "He delighted," his biographers observe, "to contemplate and

* Vide Grimshawe's *Life of Richmond*; a volume delineating the character and labours of one of the loveliest of men and ministers.

exhibit religion in its softer aspects, and its tenderness was felt more sweetly when it was seen lifting his quivering hand in earnest entreaty, and heard softening his voice in mild admonition." *

No man was a more effective preacher, with all his peculiarities, than the late Rowland Hill; and it has been remarked, that the great secret, perhaps, of the amazing effect of his preaching was its being *all nature*. He generally chose the subject which impressed and affected his own mind at the moment, and discoursed on it as he felt, not as he had previously thought; and thus, on every occasion, whether joyous or grievous, he found his way to hearts whose strings vibrated in unison with those of his own. The celebrated Sheridan used to say of him—"I go to hear Rowland Hill, because his ideas *come red hot from the heart*." "Never was there a truer description of any minister. He spoke as he felt—and the tears he shed, and the smiles that beamed on his countenance, soon waked up their fellows in the listening throng that heard him." On one occasion, the accomplished and classical Dr. Milner was so worked upon that he went to him, and said, "Mr. Hill—Mr. Hill, I felt to-day. 'Tis this slap-dash preaching, say what they will, that does all the good." "The elements of our nature"—one of his biographers remarks—"remain unchanged, after the highest refinement and cultivation of the understanding; and the same genuine feeling which touched the hearts of these highly gifted men, in Rowland Hill's *riper* age, was the secret which attracted the spell-bound multitudes who followed him in his *youthful* days." How fine is the subjoined illustration of the fervour and persuasiveness of his mode of address in the pulpit:—"Because I am in earnest, men call me an enthusiast; but I am not. Mine are the words of truth and soberness. When I first came into this part of the country (Wooton), I was

* Vide the Life of Alexander Waugh, D.D. One of the most fascinating volumes of religious biography in the language.

walking on yonder hill. I saw a gravel-pit fall in, and bury three human beings alive. I lifted up my voice for help so loud, that I was heard in the town below, at a distance of a mile. Help came, and rescued two of the poor sufferers. No one called me an enthusiast *then*. And when I see eternal destruction ready to fall upon poor sinners, and about to entail them irrecoverably in an eternal mass of woe, and call aloud on them to escape, shall I be called an enthusiast now? No, sinner, I am not an enthusiast in so doing. I call on thee aloud to fly for refuge to the hope set before thee in the Gospel of Jesus Christ."

This is the earnest style of preaching which all young ministers should at once and uniformly adopt. No style is so vivacious, so powerful, so impressive. Every sermon which a minister delivers should be pronounced with genuine and intense feeling. He should preach, invariably, as the messenger of God—as the servant of Jesus Christ—as the fervent friend of sinners. He should *beseek* them to be reconciled to God. He should yearn most tenderly and affectionately over them. He should address them as one believing his own and their immortality, and thus will he show them that he has been appointed by the Head of the Church to arouse, admonish, direct, and stimulate dying men and unconverted sinners, to make immediate application to the Lamb of God. There will be no trifling in the pulpit. A discourse will not be preached for the sake of diction, elocution, or thought; but to strike with power—to operate resistlessly on the human heart.

And, we would ask every young minister, is not this the spirit which should be uniformly displayed by you in the pulpit, while engaged in the weightiest business which can occupy the mind of any reflective and immortal being? If sin be so evil and bitter a thing in its nature and consequences; if holiness be so desirable and important; if the errors and follies of mankind be so pernicious and destructive; if the world exert so potent and malignant an

influence; if the period of human life be so limited and uncertain; if the soul be so precious from its capabilities and destiny; if the commands of God be so express and unqualified; if the miseries of hell be so fearful even to contemplate; and if the glories and felicities of heaven be so transporting—ought not you, as the minister of Jesus Christ, as the herald of salvation, to discover, in every sermon, melting tenderness, ardent and impassioned desires to benefit mankind, and the utmost energy and fervour in directing them to that beneficent and matchless Saviour who is waiting to be gracious—to rescue them from the ruins of the fall—to raise them to the ineffable glory of Paradise?

It has been beautifully observed, in relation to that admirable divine and writer, Dr. Dwight, that “he preached as a sinner and a dying man himself.” He preached as in the presence of God, and of “the spirits of just men made perfect.” He preached as though he saw his crown of glory ever before him, and as though he heard the Saviour saying, “Well done, good and faithful servant, enter thou into the joy of thy Lord!”—(Matt. xxv. 21.) He considered himself bound to forget himself, and remember nothing but the purpose for which he was sent—*the salvation of his hearers*. Every attempt at display—every attempt to exhibit his own talents, or taste, or fancy, or learning, as a preacher, was, in his view, an obvious prostitution of his office to private and unhallowed purposes.

“——— This is the man to hear :

His words will make the hardest sinner feel,
And make the coldest warm.”

Ministers uniformly find that nothing is done in the pulpit without life, without emotion. It is feeling—genuine, strong, yet enlightened feeling—not mere intellect, which interests the *majority* of hearers. They are to be reached through the heart. It is the development of artless, benevolent, holy energy—we do not, of course, mean rant—

which awakens the attention—fixes and rouses the mind—induces the most pleasurable emotions—and gains for a sermon ready and immediate access to the heart, when scarcely anything else would be productive of this effect. The plainest discourse, if delivered with simplicity, persuasiveness, and fervour, will not be delivered in vain; while the most polished, elaborate, intellectual sermon, if presented before the audience in a cold, lifeless, soporific manner, will produce, on the generality, scarcely any impression whatever.

XIV. When you enter the pulpit, aim supremely at the *conversion of sinners*.

This is to be, as ministers employed to bring men to God, your continual study. This you should regard as your paramount object—the glorious end which, by Divine agency, you should uniformly endeavour to secure. Nothing should ever induce you, in the slightest degree, to deviate from this purpose. You may be regarded as preachers of learning and eloquence; you may command admiration for your cultivated and superior abilities; but, if you are not aiming to do good—to enlighten the dark mind—to subdue the stubborn will—to soften the hard and insensible heart of the careless, reckless sinner, how can you expect a blessing? How can you at all calculate on the Saviour's approval at last?—indeed, how can you exemplify the true spirit of your work at all?

What is, or should be, the *grand* object of the Gospel minister in the pulpit, and out of the pulpit? Not merely to edify the believer, though it is confessedly important that he should be yet further instructed and established in the faith, in the great and indestructible principles, of the Gospel; not to encourage and console the afflicted Christian, though this is a most interesting and valuable part of ministerial and pastoral duty, and one which requires peculiar wisdom, discrimination and tenderness. His supreme soli-

citude should be to aim at the conversion of sinners—to seek after their moral and religious transformation by the operation of Divine grace—in a word, the entire change of their moral nature—that they may evince, by their principles, dispositions, habits, conversation and conduct, that they have become “new creatures in Christ Jesus.”

It will soon be apparent when a minister, in his preaching, is intensely anxious for the conversion of sinners. There will be a *directness*, a straightforwardness, an impressiveness in his discourses, which will be obvious to all—which must tell on the mind—and which, by God’s blessing, must be rendered permanently useful. He will not stoop to trifle with the imagination; his business will be to go, at once, to the heart, like a man who understands his work, and is anxious to aim directly at its accomplishment.

The minister who ardently desires the conversion of sinners, will always unfold in the pulpit *the simple and most material truths* of the Gospel. The great subjects of Christianity will be his great themes;—those which God has ever applied with power to the heart, and those which he ever will apply, will be the topics to which he will spontaneously and invariably recur. He will exhibit them in all their simple beauty, majesty and grandeur—in all their exquisite benevolence, in all their transcendent and unutterable significance. The necessity of faith and repentance—the value of the soul—the everlasting love of God—the inexpressible compassion of the Saviour—the inconceivable importance of an interest in the work of the Redeemer—the agency of the Holy Spirit in the illumination and salvation of man—the solemnity of death—the awfulness of the future judgment—the vastness of the inquiry—“Is there personal preparedness for eternity?”—will be the subjects on which he will constantly dwell, and which he will inculcate and enforce with the deepest seriousness and pathos.

There will, also, be *an intensity* discovered in his exhibition

of the cardinal doctrines and requirements of Christianity. With what fervour will he appeal to the consciences of sinners! with what emotion will he urge the inquiry—"Why will ye die, O house of Israel?"—(Ezek. xxxiii. 11.) With what strong feeling will he "beseech them to be reconciled to God!" In how affectionate and impassioned a manner will he express to them the invitations of redeeming mercy, assuring sinners that the real penitent will never be rejected, that the person whose heart is melted by the love of Christ, will never be sent away from the Divine footstool without a blessing! He will not speak in the pulpit without "strong cries," and, sometimes, even tears of love and compassion for the unconverted will burst from his eyes, and trickle down his cheeks. "O sinners, I not only entreat you to come to Christ—I not only weep over you, in consequence of your unbelief and hardness of heart, but I could almost die to save you; to 'pluck you as brands from the burning'—to rescue you from the misery of the second death—to snatch you from the quenchless flames of hell!"

"O how my conscience often smites me," said an affectionate and devoted minister, "that I have been so cold in such a work as that of saving souls from death. Lord, save us from hardness and insensibility of heart, in the case of perishing souls!" Think, when you preach, valued brethren, that you may be preaching *yourselves* for the *last* time. Consider that many present may be hearing the *very last sermon* to which they will ever listen. You may never see them again. They may never all look on you again. The last explanation of the way of salvation may be furnished—the last direction to Christ may be given—the last invitation may be tendered—the last entreaty may be expressed—the last warning may be pronounced. These sinners you may never behold again, until you meet them at the bar of God. Will you not, then, supremely aim at their conversion?—make this your instant, your pressing, your absorbing business?—will you not wrestle with God for a blessing on

their behalf? Will you not summon forth all your energies, pour forth all your souls, that you may be the honoured instruments of drawing them to the cross—of winning them to Christ—of preparing them for heaven? You will—you will! if men of God, you must—you must! You cannot preach and labour differently.

We have recurred before to the ministry of the immortal Whitfield: and it is always striking to contemplate what wonders were accomplished, through Divine influence, everywhere, by his preaching. Whence arose the power, the remarkable effect of his ministry? Many ministers, labouring at the time when he lived, were equally consecrated to God—were equally anxious to save souls; as theologians, many were far superior to him—their views of Divine truth were larger, deeper, more penetrating; and, yet, their ministry was by no means so successful. What, then, was the secret, under God, of Whitfield's efficiency? It appears to have consisted, principally, in the unction, the fervour, the intensity of his addresses. There were a deep-toned solemnity—an exquisite tenderness—an absorbing solicitude for the salvation of sinners, which were portrayed in his countenance, which streamed from his eyes, and which accompanied every display of his natural and impassioned eloquence, which convinced assembled thousands, beyond the possibility of a doubt, that he was *in earnest* with them, and that his most ardent desire was to bring them to God. Not one of his hearers could leave him, without being impressed with the thought, "that man aims to do me good—to save my soul!" God, therefore, gave him the desire of his heart. His ministry was honoured with a signal outpouring of the Holy Spirit; and he was made the instrument of communicating "life from the dead," not merely to hundreds, but to many thousands.

Young ministers, if you wish to be useful, eminently useful, you must, in your preaching, imitate him. Let the conversion of sinners, when you enter the pulpit, always be

present to your minds, and let it be the warmest desire of your hearts. It is indubitable, that those preachers of the word who aim at the conversion of souls—who steadily keep the eye fixed, and the powers concentrated on this great object, *never labour in vain*. One sinner and another are brought to God—drawn to Christ—prepared for heaven, through their instrumentality. The Saviour will not suffer such men to be discouraged; but, then, it must be the supreme object—the first, the last, the absorbing desire. Nothing less than this will be sufficient—nothing less than this must satisfy.

One of the most eminent ministers of the present day, who has been remarkably useful in the conversion of sinners to God, observed, after a special religious service, when addressing the ministers, and particularly the young ministers present,—“If God has at all blessed me in my labours, rendering me useful to many, during a ministry of no inconsiderable extent, it has arisen, I conceive, *principally*, from the following circumstance,—the early and earnest desire awakened within me, and the fixed determination carried out, *to aim at the conversion of sinners, in all my sermons*. I commenced my ministry resolved to make this my *first concern*—to *preach to sinners*—and so to preach to them, as that, by the Divine blessing, I might reach their hearts—penetrate their souls. God has given me my desire; and I would say to young ministers present,—‘Have the same concern *from the outset of your ministry*, and that concern will not be cherished in vain. Let it be your supreme object, and you will find that God will crown your efforts with the tokens of his *special approval*.’ ”

The late Basil Woodd, a most devoted and honoured episcopalian minister in the metropolis during a long period, mentioned, that, at the age of thirty-eight, a considerable time subsequently to his entrance on the ministry, he had kept a regular account of the instances in which he had reason to believe he had been rendered, as a minister, *essen-*

tially useful ; but that, after the instances had amounted to about *three hundred*, he had ceased to record them so minutely, or to charge his memory with further cases. Yet, at this period, his labours were only *beginning* to take that wide range which they eventually embraced, and, though no minute registry was preserved, his usefulness was most abundant. His biographer observes, "that his ministry consisted not in the splendour of pulpit eloquence, in the display of extraordinary natural talent, or in any elaborate arts of persuasion. His eloquence was that of *simple truth*, flowing from a heart which glowed with love to his Saviour, and evincing a deep and tender concern for the salvation of souls. There was no affectation of novelty—no attempt to dazzle or surprise by extraordinary statement—no disposition to go beyond his depth—no pretension to more than ordinary discovery—no anxiety to unfold the mysteries of unfulfilled prophecy ; his public discourses were almost exclusively elementary, experimental, and practical."

Ever aim then, valued brethren—those of you who are preparing for the work, and those who are just entering on the pastorate—ever aim at the imitation of such men. Ever aspire after the salvation of souls. Make the conversion of your hearers, in all your discourses, your main object,—never keep this out of view. Select your subjects—compose your sermons—deliver your addresses—pray to the Saviour after you have uttered them, under the influence of this absorbing desire, and God will bless you. You will not, you cannot labour without sinners being awakened—without prodigals being reclaimed—without the poor, solitary, miserable wanderer being brought into the sheepfold. And, if you are only instrumental in your several localities, in the conversion of one sinner to God, what a work of which to be merely the honoured instrument. Contemplate, for a moment, the wide extent to which the influence of a single conversion may reach ! What glorious consequences may result from such an event ! Indeed, it is impossible for you

at all to estimate it aright. The day of judgment—the revelations of eternity alone—will fully unfold the magnitude of the achievement.

Perhaps, at the outset of your ministry, you preached the Gospel in some small, sequestered village, delivering there a simple and affectionate sermon, full of Christ, and breathing nothing but his love,—the result, by the Divine blessing, was the conversion of a peasant; week after week you met him, probably, in the same external condition as that in which he was found,—still the labourer, holding the spade, turning up and culturing the ground, enduring the burden and heat of the day. At the second coming of Christ, however, he will appear as a prince, wearing his magnificent crown,—the crown of unfading glory. The convert, whatever his outward condition, has now the same body. But what a resurrection! What a glorious body then! What blessedness, when the spirit will be re-united to it! What an immortality of dignity, security, and enjoyment! Then, what will be the joy, the exultation, of those ministers of Jesus Christ, who were the humble, though honoured instruments of commencing the work, which omnipotent grace will bring to such a consummation! Let these thoughts ever be present with you, when you stand up to deliver every sermon. They will produce the most salutary impression, and lead you to preach effectively to the people.

XV. *Preach to all.*

In other words, let your discourses always be marked by their broad and unrestricted character. This was a distinguishing feature in connexion with the ministry of the apostles. They were commanded to “preach the Gospel to every creature,” and they did so pre-eminently. They were never crippled—never fettered. They never confined their labours to a select number, excluding all the rest from a participation in the benefits of the Gospel. They did not restrict their ministry to the inhabitants of one town, city,

district, or empire. They went everywhere preaching the Word; and they proclaimed it in the fullest, freest, most unshackled manner. There was no limitation, no exception, no exclusion. There were no barriers erected—no party-wall was raised up—no stumbling-block was thrown in the way of the reception of the Gospel. None were forgotten, whatever their condition—whatever their country—whatever their ignorance—whatever their previous guilt and depravity. None were excluded from the overtures of Divine mercy through the Lord Jesus. The great principle embodied in their discourses was the following,—“Whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved.”—(Romans x. 13.) There was a solicitude to do good to all—to win all to Christ. How fine is the acknowledgment of Paul—(1 Cor. ix. 20, 21, 22)—summing up the whole, in those generous and noble expressions, worthy of the apostle of the Gentiles,—“I am made all things to *all men*, that I might, by all means, save some.” Now, this unlimited effort to do good, this universal tender of the invitations of Christianity, was the crowning feature in the ministry of the apostles. And we would earnestly counsel every minister, and especially every *young* minister, to *preach to all*, not to a few; to preach the Gospel to sinners—to persons needing mercy—to persons in imminent danger of perishing—to persons who, if they do not believe in the Lord Jesus, must be lost, and lost for ever.

No minister must fetter himself in the pulpit; nor must he allow himself to be fettered by any, whatever their wealth, influence, or connexion with him. In the pulpit, he must be unrestricted—perfectly unshackled. There he must address every man, woman, and child, in the assembly. He must never be afraid of tendering the invitations of redeeming mercy in the most unqualified manner.

No ministry is scriptural which is confined to a few. No ministry has any life without expansiveness. No ministry has power unless the overtures of the Gospel are freely and

unequivocally expressed. Tell sinners, then, all sinners, what the Saviour himself has stated—"If *any man* thirst, let him come unto me and drink."—(John vii. 37). If you are shackled in the pulpit—if you are reluctant or afraid to express the invitations of Christianity in the most unqualified manner, as the apostles tendered them, how can you imitate them? How can you enter into their spirit? What good to men, as sinners, can your preaching accomplish? How can you breathe the temper, or execute the work of that Saviour, who pitied all—who aided all—who was attentive to all—who regarded the cries of all who came to him, and who preached the glad tidings of his salvation to every guilty, miserable, perishing sinner, repairing to him that he might be pardoned, rendered happy, and delivered from the torments of hell.

XVI. Let your preaching *be very faithful*.

Carefully guard against personalities in the pulpit—any references to persons in your audience, so definite and marked, as that *they* are fixed on by others immediately as the objects of allusion or attack. This is most unmanly—most offensive—under any circumstances, most unwarrantable; still, while in your preaching you are never personal, and could not act so indelicately and improperly, always be *faithful*. Faithful preaching and personal preaching are very broadly distinguished. In all your discourses let there be a close, pointed, and decisive appeal to the human conscience. Let no man escape. Let no sinner go home and say, "The minister did not preach to me."

No quality in the pulpit is more important than this—a manly, scriptural, enlightened, unblenching fidelity. Give "flattering titles" to none. Let every man have the truth of God presented before him, without mistake, concealment, or the slightest omission. Let this be almost the *master quality* in your ministry. Let the sinner, the formalist, the hypocrite, be followed by you into every labyrinth into which

Satan and their own corruptions have dragged them. Let the penetrating and awful light of Divine truth be poured in on their darkened minds—on their slumbering or petrified consciences.

The apostolic ministry was remarkable for its success,—and was it not remarkable for its boldness and fidelity? Was there ever any trimming? any fear of man? any avoidance of the great subjects of the Gospel—Christ crucified—Christ risen—Christ glorified? Did they, at any time, shun these master-themes, from an apprehension of enduring suffering, persecution, or death? Quite the reverse. Wherever they went—whatever the character of their audience—whatever the probable results of their efforts, there was no concealment of the truth—no hesitancy of statement—not the slightest disguise or omission of the great principles of Christianity, to please any, however powerful in themselves, or in the opposition which they might direct against them.

Look at the address of Peter on the day of Pentecost—so memorable and spirit-stirring. Examine it thoroughly, again and again. Make it a study. Regard it as a continual model. What nobleness—what fidelity—what intrepidity—what surpassing fearlessness—what Christian heroism!

Read carefully the oration of Paul on Mars' Hill—his pleadings before Felix and Agrippa—and his epistles, especially to the Galatian and Corinthian churches. What is their charm—almost their crowning beauty and glory? Their heroic and heaven-inspired fidelity. What nobility of mind! What determination to speak the truth! What resolution of purpose to magnify his office!

What strikes us so powerfully in the sermons of Charnock and Howe—Manton and Baxter—Bunyan and Flavel? We reply, the simple, vigorous, direct, and faithful exhibition of "the truth as it is in Jesus." What arrested the attention of multitudes in the preaching of Whitfield, Berridge, and

Rowland Hill?—its plain, broad, vivid, faithful, fearless delineations of character, and representations of the great subjects of the Gospel. And if the published discourses of our living and most useful preachers be perused attentively, scarcely any feature will be more prominent to us than their fidelity—their thorough determinateness of character and purpose. And we would ask, what is preaching worth, without manly and Christian boldness—without enlightened and unwavering fidelity? Where is its beauty? Where is its dignity? Where is its weight or efficiency?

We must, if the servants of Christ, preach the truth; whether men will hear and receive it or not, we must, like the apostles, seek to please and obey God rather than men. Happy and honoured, indeed, are those ministers whose pulpit testimony is invariably faithful—and who can always, without the slightest hesitancy, thus express themselves to their hearers, “For we are not as many, who corrupt the Word of God; but as of sincerity, but as of God, in the sight of God speak we in Christ.”—(2 Corinthians ii. 17.)

XVII. Let your preaching be marked by its *impres-siveness*.

Ever guard in the pulpit against flatness, tameness—a style of preaching which is cold, general, ineffective. Let your ministry have point, energy, power. The preaching of the apostles was marked by its efficacy—by the weight which it commanded—by the manner, wherever they went, in which it told. It was adapted to human nature. It was eminently fitted to arrest the attention—to seize the popular mind—to induce thought and inquiry, and, though the most determinate opposition was provoked, in consequence of the unbelief and depravity of man, still their ministry was never lifeless, barren, inoperative—nor, valued brethren, must yours be. It should tell—it must tell. Aim, then, at an *impressive* style of preaching.

Be *serious* in the pulpit; unless you are, your preaching

cannot be effective. The light and flippant preacher—the trifler in the pulpit may talk for ever; but what will be the result? Will he talk to any good purpose? If you would be impressive preachers, be serious in speaking to sinners on the most serious and awful subjects. Let deep-toned solemnity characterise your manner in the pulpit. Let it be seen, by your language, by the structure of your discourses, even by your very countenance, and the involuntary movement of your hand or finger, that you are serious with your audience. There can be no impressiveness without this spirit.

Be *plain* and *idiomatic* in your *language*. Avoid a verbose—languid—stilted—Johnsonian style. Let your language in the pulpit be always simple, direct, forcible. Uniformly shun a mode of preaching which many adopt, which is ornate, without simplicity—laboured, without nature and ease—abounding in expressions which numbers of the audience cannot possibly comprehend. Your preaching can never be impressive, unless your language be marked by its plainness, directness, force.

Indulge in *appropriate amplification*. Some degree of repetition in the pulpit is necessary, in order that the memory may be aided, and that a more powerful effect may be produced. Our best and most striking preachers amplify—recur, again and again, to the same thoughts and inquiries—that truth may take a deeper lodgment in the mind—and that the heart, by dwelling again and again on one grand sentiment, may be more sensibly affected. “The preacher will often see, by the look and manner of a hearer, that what he failed to accomplish by a first stroke, has been done by a *second*.”

Preach to *the common people*—those of simple minds and manners, of unaffected and, how often, of eminent piety. They are excellent judges of ministers, and discriminating hearers of sermons. We have generally observed, that when the preaching of a minister is disliked by *the devout poor*,

there is not much that is really valuable in it. They can appreciate, and will honour, the best ministry.

Let your preaching—to reach all, and especially the *young* and the *humbler parts* of your congregations—abound in *illustration*. “Effective oratory,” it has been observed, “may justly be said to be painting for the ear. Some living preachers are magnificent instances of the power of this art, and every preacher should set it down among the necessary elements of his professional wisdom, and do his best at it.” Whitfield made great use of the *pencil*. “He *painted* the scenes which he was anxious his hearers should feel—such as Abraham’s sacrifice of his son—or the sufferings of Christ. A fine and vigorous imagination eminently qualified him for this.” In your preaching, be descriptive—indulge in rich, vivid, animated, illustration. It will strike, and permanently impress, while a cold, dry, didactic style will be flat and powerless.

Why is the “Pilgrim’s Progress” so much read and admired by all? Because it is so original—so lifelike—so vivacious—so full of incident—so graphical. It is a gallery of paintings. Why is the history of Joseph so impressive? Why are the parables of Christ so riveting and effective? Because they are speaking pictures. We not merely read, *we see*.

It has been beautifully observed, that the Bible “is not a series of logical definitions, like dead bodies well laid out and dressed—all is life and motion. It gives us actions rather than words. We view the fruits of righteousness growing on the tree. We have not the pilgrimage, but the pilgrim; and go along with him from the city of destruction to the shining city. We are not spectators only; we are his companions; we are interested in all he meets with. We weep when he weeps, and rejoice when he rejoices. It is not Christianity set before us, but the Christian; and we attend him following his Saviour, denying himself, taking up his cross, resisting temptation, struggling, with unwearied

patience, through a thousand difficulties—braving with fortitude every danger, and emerging out into glory, honour, and immortality.”*

Let your sermons, to be impressive, be *adapted to the popular mind*. Your preaching, to strike, must apply to man, as man—to man, as a sinner—to man, as a being destined for eternity. Religion is, pre-eminently, adapted to human nature, in all its minute and boundless varieties—and, in preaching the Gospel, you must remember this. Study, therefore, character. Read human nature. Unfold *man as he is*, and your discourses will instruct, will rivet, will come with power. “The preacher should make the *practical* study of human nature commensurate with the examination of Scripture.”

Let your discourses be marked by the *point and fulness* of their *applications*. They cannot be impressive, if this consideration be neglected. Application—enlightened, serious, fervent, naturally rising out of the subject—is the very life of preaching. Without it there is *no soul*. A chaste, nicely balanced, elegant composition in the pulpit will not do much, without direct and commanding appeals. It has been observed, that “the pronoun *they* falls with a very different effect from the pronoun *you*.” Applications of sermons should never be restricted to a sentence or two at the close, when the preacher is exhausted, and the people also—they should, as much as possible, be applicatory throughout.

The application, too, of a discourse should be carefully studied. It often proves ineffective, because it consists in a few loose, crude, undigested remarks. The most impressive part of a sermon should be the most calmly and maturely weighed. How many beautifully composed sermons have we listened to, which, in *the best, the highest* sense, have scarcely told at all, because there has been *no application*!

That your sermons may be impressive, see that they are uniformly *practical*. Preach on no subject whatever without

being practical—eminently practical. Let great principles, to purify the heart—to elevate the affections—to chasten the temper—and to control and beautify the life, be embodied and inculcated in all your pulpit addresses. Never preach on any doctrine of Scripture, however consolatory in itself, without minutely specifying its practical and holy tendencies. In the estimation of the wise and good, no sermons, however brilliant, are worth much, unless they are identified with the elevation of the character, and with our conformity to the Divine image. You will never hear any professors declaiming against sound, practical preaching, except those who are lukewarm, worldly, inconsistent, or whose sentiments and temper are decidedly anti-scriptural. The preaching of the Word cannot be too practical. The end at which ministers are to aim, is to induce obedience to the will of Christ; and there is nothing which more fixes the attention of an enlightened and devout audience, or which produces a deeper impression, than that style of preaching which shows the hearers of the Gospel what is *indispensable* to regulate their daily conduct—to mould and beautify their character—and to secure their endless happiness.

Invariably remember, also, that *evangelical* preaching is always the most impressive. There are no subjects which arrest the attention sooner—which interest the feelings more readily—or which affect the heart more powerfully—than the simple and strictly evangelical subjects of the Gospel. The love of God to man—the compassion of Christ towards sinners—the grace and power of the Holy Spirit—the doctrines of justification by faith—the atonement—the all-sufficiency of Divine grace—the fulness and freeness of the salvation of the Gospel—are the subjects on which you cannot expatiate too frequently, or too affectionately, if you are at all anxious to rivet the attention, and to benefit the souls of any congregation. No doctrines, in their influence on the human heart, can be *at all compared* with the doctrines which relate to the crucified, the risen, the inter-

ceding Redeemer. These are the doctrines to edify the church, and to become "the power of God unto salvation;" and sure we are of the accuracy of the observation, that "evangelical preaching, *cæteris paribus*, uniformly attracts the largest congregations, and is the *only* exhibition of truth which God honours by conversion."

To be impressive in your preaching, show that you are *in earnest*. Let earnestness breathe in all your invitations—live in all your appeals—glow in all your remonstrances—burn in all your exhibitions of the truth of God. Let the spirit of Paul be uniformly displayed by you, "Brethren, my heart's desire and prayer to God for Israel is, that they might be saved."—(Romans x. 1.) "My little children, of whom I *travail in birth again*, until Christ be formed in you."—(Gal. iv. 19.) "Now, then, we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God did beseech you by us; we pray you, in Christ's stead, be ye reconciled to God."—(2 Corinthians v. 20.)

If you are at all desirous that your ministry should be impressive, you must imitate the apostles. They were always *anxious to save their hearers*, hence they were always impressive. Resemble them in *your* ministry, and that ministry will be distinguished by its power and efficiency. Never preach with an unfeeling heart. Let sinners perceive that you wish, that you long to do them good; and show, by the tones of the voice, by the glance of the eye, by your entire manner, that you are intensely solicitous for their salvation. This is the ministry to be impressive. Such preaching must result in great and permanent blessings.

XVIII. Endeavour to improve in your preaching.

This improvement in the character of your ministry is exceedingly desirable, and you should studiously aim at its cultivation. Besides, it will naturally be expected by the people among whom you are stationed, and it will be seen by them, provided that you "make full proof of your ministry."

Preaching the Gospel three or four times *weekly*, from year to year, will make great demands on you, especially if you wish your ministrations to prove at all acceptable and useful. Addressing the same people, or nearly so, during fifteen or twenty years, and having many intelligent and reflecting persons in your audiences, many who are well acquainted with the Scriptures—who form enlarged and discriminating views of the doctrines and principles of the Word of God—you will find that not a little mental effort will be requisite to keep in advance of the most intellectual and devout among your stated hearers.

Be fully resolved, then, as you advance in years, and become more intimately and anxiously acquainted with the labours of your office, that, by the Divine help and blessing, your preaching shall decidedly improve. That it shall become—

Increasingly *simple*—in language, in thought, in illustration, only aiming at the simplicity of Christ himself.

Increasingly *evangelical*—fuller of the Gospel; more enriched with those doctrines on which Christians feed, and by which sinners live—more and more imbued with that spirit which characterises the New Testament.

Increasingly *intelligent*—more reflective—more discriminating; abounding in evidences of greater scriptural research and inquiry, and calculated to interest and benefit the most cultivated and thoughtful in your congregations.

Increasingly *experimental* and *persuasive*—discovering more heart—expressing greater tenderness—characterised more strikingly by love of the Truth, and “love of the Spirit.”

Increasingly *faithful*—unfolding and inculcating the transcendently momentous doctrines of the Gospel with deeper solemnity—with a broader and firmer tone—with more of the decision and fidelity of the apostles than ever.

Now, to secure this marked and continued improvement in your preaching—

You must be *diligent students of the Holy Scripture*.—The Word of God must be constantly examined by you; not merely that your minds may be expanded, and your hearts benefited, but that your preaching may be heightened in beauty, deepened in impressiveness and effect. The Bible must be *your classic*. With its principles—facts—characters—histories—institutions—laws—invitations—blessings—promises—and warnings—you must be not only well acquainted, but increasingly familiar.

You must give yourselves perpetually to a course of sound, valuable reading, and especially to the study of theology—that the mind may be braced—that your views of the leading subjects of revelation may be broad, deep, systematic, and comprehensive; and thus your profiting will appear to all men.

You must *write much*.—This you will find of essential moment, especially during the first ten years of your ministry. If you would improve as preachers you must be diligent and reflective *as writers*. You must pay marked attention to composition. You will not excel nor improve, without forming and maintaining this habit. We do not say that you are to write, *fully out, four* sermons weekly. This would be almost impossible. Even were it possible, it would not be desirable. But, under any circumstances, let *one discourse* every week, at least, be written out fully, and be prepared with the greatest care. Such an effort will amply repay you, and, while you are benefited, your hearers also will be much profited.

Dr. Spring has observed, that “one sermon a week, well planned, well digested, carefully written, and faithfully applied, is labour enough for any man who allows himself any time for intellectual improvement. One such sermon a week will enable you to draw upon your Text Book for two or three others, without much preparation (that is, in

writing). In a word, make *every* discourse *as good* as you can make it. As a general rule, *never write a hasty sermon.*"

If you would improve in your ministry, you must abound in *private prayer*. You must be often on your knees. You must, in your closets, maintain habitual communion with God. You must pray much and fervently, with the Bible open before you. The spirit of prayer will deeply solemnise—will shed light on the mind. It will communicate thought, illustration, tenderness, and powerful emotion, which nothing else can equally impart. What are discourses, however polished, elaborate, eloquent, without prayer? Cold, heartless, lifeless—awakening no devout thought—inspiring no holy feeling. Remember, then, that if you would improve continually in your ministry, there must be the habitual maintenance of prayer—real, fervid prayer; for which there can be *no substitute*.

This is the only plan for you to adopt, in order that you may improve in your preaching, and preserve and increase interest and variety in your public ministrations. And, we ask, should you not be ambitious, at once, to adopt and maintain this plan? What eulogy can be finer, or more to be coveted, than that which an attached and devoted people pronounce on their minister? "The oftener we hear our pastor, the more we esteem and value his ministrations. He is always improving. Every sermon is good—indeed, better than that which preceded, or appears to us to be so." This is the eulogium we are anxious should be pronounced with regard to you.

XIX. Avoid three faults in preaching which are frequently indulged.

Want of clearness in the tone of voice.—This is a very common fault in preaching; but it is very unfortunate and injurious. Sometimes it arises from delicacy in the organs of speech—sometimes from nervous timidity—sometimes from inconsideration—and sometimes, we fear, from a wish,

by avoiding a bold, powerful, and fervent style of address, to be regarded as more polite and gentlemanly in the pulpit. We would, however, counsel all young ministers to *speak distinctly*—with the utmost possible clearness of tone. Never address an audience in a noisy, boisterous manner—this is quite unnecessary, and is painful to many; still, let all present *hear* the sermon—hear all the sermon—and, especially, let them hear distinctly *the text* on which the discourse is founded. It is usual with numbers of young ministers, now, to utter the text almost *inaudibly*. This is a growing evil, and it is a *great* one. We would earnestly say to you, when preaching the Gospel, do not rant—do not be violent (fervour and violence are very distinguishable)—do not exhaust yourselves before you have arrived at the middle of the discourse you may be delivering, but ever preserve a natural, easy and clear articulation. It is of much greater importance than many preachers consider. And always remember that you are not merely to elevate your voice, so that those who are in the *immediate vicinity* of the pulpit may hear the sermon, but that those who are at the *extremity* of the building may listen to the discourse without difficulty, and hear, if possible, *every word*. Besides, you should remember, when you are speaking to the people, that you have *always* some, and often many, *deaf persons* in your congregation. *They* should not be forgotten. And they require, not loudness, but a *distinct*, easy and *equable* articulation. Aim at this—it will be connected with your *acceptance*, as preachers of the Gospel, more than you are aware.

Guard against a *scolding manner* in the pulpit—sharpness—tartness—acerbity—even, at times, the development of *not a little temper* in preaching the Gospel. We are sensible that there is much, very much, which a minister has to experience. The coldness of some—the neglect of others—the ingratitude of others—the opposition of others—are heavy trials to bear meekly. Still, these

things are what *the Master* himself had to endure, and a minister of Christ must continually learn "to bear and forbear;"—never to be unfaithful, but, in the pulpit, never *to scold*—that is, to show temper. *Weep over* sinners, rather than scold. A scolding manner in the pulpit never does any good, but always harm; and, sometimes, *much injury*. It is the fault of many preachers that, when anything is wrong with their people, instead of talking to them privately, they scold them from the pulpit on the Sabbath. Young ministers should particularly remember, that the words of wisdom are never listened to so readily as when spoken in mildness—distilling, yet penetrating, like the dew. In this respect, imitate the Saviour. He is *the model*. Doddridge says—"Generally lament over sinners, rather than *menace*, or *threaten* them." Fine advice to all ministers.

Avoid *tediousness in preaching*.—This is "the besetting sin"—the great snare of many preachers—they are always *too long*. They weary and *tire out* their auditories. They occasion unpleasant and painful feelings in consequence, which interfere with their acceptance, and mar their usefulness. It was excellent counsel which was tendered to a young minister:—"Let your sermons be appropriate in their length—a length that neither tires the hearer, nor excessively fatigues the preacher. Many a sermon has been heard, for the *first two-thirds* of it, with attention and interest, which has been heard, *for the remainder*, with impatience and disgust. Perhaps it requires more wisdom to know *how*, and *when*, to close a discourse, than judiciously to conduct it through its previous stages. *Cease to speak*, when you have *finished all you have to say*; and never be so imprudent as in the *last five minutes* to *undo all* that your previous labour has, perhaps, well accomplished." These are admirable instructions. We have observed, that there is no offence which hearers are *more unwilling to forgive* than tediousness in preaching. Besides, remember how

many in your audiences have no religion whatever; therefore, be very careful you do not weary and disgust them, by the undue length of your discourses. A sermon whose duration is forty-five or fifty minutes, is always much more acceptable, and effective, than one which extends to an hour and a quarter. This is often forgotten.

XX. Never preach the Word without *much prayer for the assistance and blessing of the Holy Spirit.*

Never open the Bible, to *select* a subject for the pulpit, without presenting prayer to the Holy Spirit for his direction, and then you will be guided aright. Never begin the *composition* of a sermon without soliciting the instruction and influence of the Holy Spirit, that light from heaven may stream on the Word of God, on the subject you may be anxious to elucidate, and that it may be unfolded to you in all its simplicity, beauty, and importance. Never enter the pulpit without looking up, most earnestly, to the same Divine Agent, that he would aid you, while engaged in proclaiming the Gospel—impart to you suitable ideas—strengthen your memory—give to you words of power, and send home the message with effect to the hearts of sinners. This is the way to prove acceptable, growingly interesting, and effective preachers.

Doddridge observed, that he never advanced well in human learning without prayer, and that he always made the *most proficiency* in his studies when he prayed with the greatest fervency. The experience of every holy and successful minister corroborates his assertion. And so will you find it in the pulpit, when you have prayed long and earnestly *before* you enter “the sacred desk:”—when you acknowledge to the Holy Spirit your entire reliance on his agency—when you ascend the pulpit under the influence of the most devotional feelings—when, as you are speaking to the people, your souls are breathing the petitions, “Lord, help us!” “Send us help from the sanctuary, and strengthen us out of

Zion"—then you will realise that your ministry is most effective ; and it will be delightful to you, as well as profitable to others, to preach the Gospel, when thus aided from above. Your sermons thus, to a great extent, dictated by the Spirit of God, will be full of light—full of devotion—full of the Scriptures—full of love—full of heaven—full of power.

We would affectionately counsel you to retire for prayer to the Divine Spirit immediately *before* you preach and immediately *after*. This is the way to imitate the most distinguished and holy ministers—Whitfield—Doddridge—Cadogan—Berridge—Venn—Cecil—Newton. This is the way to secure—to *draw down*—the blessing. To have God with you—to have “the unction from the Holy One” resting on your ministry—to have “the Word of Christ” applied with life and energy to the heart.

Who can wonder that the ministry of many preachers of the Gospel has little or no *power*, when there is little or no *earnest prayer*—*preceding, accompanying, and following* its exercise? No one can be surprised that it is flat, dead, profitless. The wonder would be to find it otherwise.

We want, then, in concluding this chapter, to impress it upon you, that the *very soul* of eloquence is *deep and elevated piety*. No man can be, in the *noblest* sense, a great preacher, unless he is living near to God—cultivating eminent spirituality of mind—rejoicing continually in the boundless love of God his Saviour. When such a minister enters the pulpit to proclaim the Gospel, he will pour forth his whole heart while addressing sinners, and showing them “the way of salvation.” The purest and most glowing passions will be kindled within him and his hearers.

It is stated, with regard to Whitfield, that “every accent of his voice spoke to the ear—every feature of his face, every motion of his hands, every gesture spoke to the eye ; so that

the most dissipated and thoughtless found their attention involuntarily fixed." And what fixed it? The sincerity and earnestness of the man, induced by the *fervour of his piety*—by the ardour of his love to God—by the devotedness to the Lord Jesus, which pre-eminently characterised him. As his biographer, Mr. Philip, justly remarks, "After all, the grand secret of Whitfield's power was his *devotional spirit*. Had he been less prayerful, he would have been less powerful. He was the prince of preachers without the veil, because he was a Jacob *within the veil*. His face shone when he came down from the mount, because he had been long alone with God upon the mount."

It is mentioned respecting the excellent Cotton Mather, that, in studying and preparing his discourses, he would endeavour to make even that an exercise of devotion for his own soul. Accordingly, his mode was, at the end of every paragraph, to pause, and endeavour to make his soul feel some holy impression of the truths contained in it. This he considered an excellent means of delivering his sermons with life and spirit, and warming the hearts of his people by it; and so he found it.

Now, this is the preaching, the character of pulpit addresses, which we are anxious, most anxious, that all our ministers, and especially our young ministers, should adopt and maintain. We have recurred to some great principles, and endeavoured to adhere, as closely as possible, to the letter and spirit of the Word of God; and sure we are that, in the public and regular exercise of the ministry, no Divine blessing will be imparted, if these principles are unheeded.

But, we would say to the rising ministry, what a work is before you! How arduous! How vast! How responsible! What learning—what study—what reading—what holy contemplation—what examination of the Scriptures—what observation of human nature and human life—what a spirit of prayer—what reliance on Divine agency—will all be necessary, in order that you may preach in the manner described!

Will you, however, always aim at it? Will you seek, in the best sense, to excel in the pulpit, and to be rendered blessings both to believers and unbelievers? Have the Saviour's discourses, and the addresses of Paul and Peter continually before you; make them your models, and, in all your sermons, let the sinner be humbled—Christ be exalted—the Holy Spirit be honoured—in a word, let it be your *supreme* business, in preaching, that *God may be glorified*. “Much,” remarks a distinguished minister, “as I value talent, and deeply enamoured as I am of the charms of genuine eloquence, I would rather see mere mediocrity, or scarcely that, provided there be correctness of scriptural statement, and the *unction of real piety*, than genius of the sublimest order *unsanctified*; a blaze of oratory in the pulpit, with affecting instances of moral obliquity in the life; eloquence in the tongue, without grace in the heart.” *

* Raffles.

CHAPTER VIII.

COUNSELS IN RELATION TO UNDERTAKING A PASTORATE.

No step, during your existence here, is more important, or will require greater solicitude and caution, than this. You cannot anticipate it with solemnity too deep, with anxiety too intense, with prayer too fervent. And these remarks will apply, with increased energy, to your *first* pastorate; the period when you *first* deliberately undertake the oversight of souls—enter on your *first* sphere of ministerial labour—and form your *first* engagement with a people who invite you from love, and from a sincere desire that you should watch for their salvation, and study, preach, and labour for their spiritual benefit, unless the Lord otherwise ordain, until the hour of death.

Your *character*, remember, may be, to a great extent, *moulded* by your *first* pastoral charge. How important, then, that everything should be carefully weighed, as in the presence of God, and in the light of eternity; that you should enter on no pastorate in connexion with which you find that the doctrinal sentiments of the people are lax and indeterminate. Robert Hall observes, with his accustomed acuteness, in his admirable Life of Toller, that “the reciprocal influence of a minister and a congregation, on each other, is so incessant and powerful, that I would earnestly dissuade an inexperienced youth from connecting himself with a people whose doctrine is erroneous, or whose piety is doubtful, lest he should be tempted to consult his ease, by choosing to yield to a current he would find it difficult to resist. To root up error, and reclaim a people from inveterate habits of vice and irreligion, is unquestionably

a splendid achievement, but it requires a hardihood of character, and decision of principle, not often found in young persons."

Not only will your character, in a great degree, be moulded, and brought out by your *first* pastoral charge, but your *happiness*, probably, throughout life, may be identified with it. You may realise enjoyments, in that *first* pastoral relation to a flock, whose remembrance will be delightful and sustaining to you at every future period, or you may experience sorrows, poignant trials, on which you will never be able to dwell without being powerfully affected.

Besides, your usefulness in the church of God may be involved, to a very great extent, throughout the whole of your ministerial career, by your *first* pastorate. If you are rash, unfortunate, unhappy, in undertaking your first charge, you may suffer, in your ministerial capacity, during every succeeding year of official service. Your influence may be narrowed in its range, and diminished in its power; your public engagements, in other spheres of exertion, may be materially impaired in their utility and efficiency.

Attend, then, in the prospect of undertaking a pastorate, and, especially, your *first* pastorate, to the following succinct, and, we think, important directions.

1. Let your *probationary period* with a congregation be *ample*.

You may, perhaps, after supplying a congregation only a few weeks, receive a call, and it may be very warmly expressed. You may be greatly encouraged by it; but, prior to coming to a decision—prior to its distinct and positive acceptance, have *ample time*. In a matter of so much moment—a matter whose consequences will be commensurate with eternity, do nothing precipitately. A hasty and inconsiderate step may be most detrimental to your happiness, and may seriously affect your future progress and usefulness.

It is very necessary that you should know the people, and that the people should know you. This mutual acquaintance between a minister and a congregation, prior to the formation of a permanent engagement between them, an engagement which may be associated with the happiness, the spiritual welfare, the eternal salvation of hundreds—and, in some instances, probably, thousands—is of incalculable importance. Allow yourself, then, time for becoming *well acquainted* with the people, and let the people have ample opportunities of forming an accurate judgment respecting you.

It is of great moment, too, before you settle, especially in connexion with your *first* charge, that your *character should be tried*—that your intellectual and religious character—that your ministerial gifts and graces—should be clearly and fully developed. It is most desirable, for your own sake, and that of others, that your abilities should *be tested*. It should be seen, not only how you can begin, but how you can *go on*; not merely how you can preach one sermon, but *fifty*; not merely how you can speak to the people in the pulpit, but how you can speak *to God* on their behalf—how you can conduct devotional meetings and Bible classes—address the young—and attend to other public engagements devolving on a minister of Jesus Christ.

Is it not most important, also, that *your adaptation* to the place and people should be manifest to yourself and others? This has often been neglected previously to settling;—there has been no reflection, no inquiry, on the point;—and what have been the results? A diminution of interest—dissatisfaction among the members of the church—a declining congregation—little usefulness. Before you settle anywhere, ask the question, *again and again*, “*Am I adapted to the people—and are the people adapted to me?*” Without this mutual adaptation, can there be any permanent acceptance—any steady and growing interest—any progressive usefulness? This point, we are persuaded, is of much

greater moment than many young ministers have considered it to be. Without regarding it, they have accepted a call to the pastorate hastily, settled prematurely, and materially impaired their comfort, and lessened their usefulness. And, we firmly believe, not only that many young ministers, but that many churches, have sustained great and irreparable injury by being too precipitate with regard to settling. Have ample time, therefore, during your probationary period, before receiving—at any rate, before *accepting*—a call. Is not one month much too limited?—ought you not to allow yourself three, or six months, prior to coming to a decision?

2. Let *your call be unanimous.*

This we cannot urge too strenuously on the attention of *every young* minister, under all circumstances, and, especially, in relation to his first charge, and a numerous and important congregation. If, when you settle, you have only a *small minority* against you, and that minority be composed of persons of intelligence and influence, and, probably, some active and restless spirits among them, your comfort and usefulness may be seriously affected.

We have heard of some, and known some, ministers who have gone to churches where there was a considerable minority against them; and yet, by their consummate prudence, their amiable spirit, their piety, or their talents, they have, in time, subdued that minority, and turned the disaffected into friends, or neutralised their opposition; still it is, in the case of young and inexperienced ministers, a hazardous step, one which may involve in great difficulty, be associated with unceasing anxiety, and terminate in removal.

We would say, to every young man about settling in the ministry, by no means take such a step yourself. It is not safe, and, certainly, at the *outset* of your ministerial and pastoral labours, it is desirable, most desirable, to have your arrangements made with wisdom and security, so that your

comfort may not be interfered with, and the usefulness of your efforts may not be diminished.

Pause, with regard to going to *any* congregation, where you have a minority of any weight against you; and even a small and comparatively insignificant minority is, sometimes, not to be despised. The disaffected may increase, and your happiness may be withered.

3. Let your invitation *originate from the church.*

This is the body which you are *specially* to recognise—to which you are to look—in which you are to confide—with which you will be most intimately connected—and from which your highest enjoyments will spring. “Congregations are the creatures of circumstances; churches are the institutions of God.”* Undertake no pastorate, the call to which does not emanate distinctly from the church. Let this be a *fixed law* to govern you throughout life, and in all your ministerial movements. Not that we would, in any way, repudiate, or improperly diminish, the legitimate influence and weight of the congregation, regarded as such. If the question be proposed, are the subscribers to have no voice? We would reply—quite the reverse. We would show them the utmost respect, and give them all the weight to which they are fairly entitled. Still, we would always remember, that it is *the province of the church to call pastors*; and you must ever recognise this right, maintain this authority. It is sacred—unquestionable—Divine. By doing so you adhere to the holy Scriptures, carry out the principles of all well-regulated Congregational societies, and act with a view to your future peace and comfort. If the church be not in its proper place—if it do not exert its legitimate influence—you cannot expect happiness, or a blessing on your labours. Should you, by receiving a call to the pastorate from the congregation, or the influential subscribers, or the trustees, to the neglect or the virtual exclusion of the church

* Robert Hall.

in its collective capacity, you will be sanctioning an anomaly, which will not only work most injuriously, but which is most unseemly, and utterly repugnant to the Word of God.

4. Do not be unwilling to settle, for the first few years, *in some retired neighbourhood.*

Such a station may, in the arrangements of Divine Providence, be more fitted for you, than a populous and exciting town or city; and it may be important for you to occupy a sphere of this limited kind for a time, that you may be better prepared for your great work, and that you may not be injured by the unceasing and undesirable demand which would be made on your mind and energies by settling, so soon as you leave college, in some locality of large population, abounding in intellectual and commercial excitement, where you might have, at once, a congregation of ten or twelve hundred.

Many young ministers, we fear, have been ruined by being *too ambitious*—by being too desirous, when leaving the academic roof, of occupying stations of magnitude and influence. They have not been designed or prepared for them. They have been soon and materially injured by them. Their minds have been unduly tasked. They have not been able to meet the claims preferred, to grapple with the difficulties and trials which they had to undergo—and, in how many instances, has self-confidence or self-complacency been induced, which has proved most baneful in its influence?

Job Orton observes, that ministers in general have been too unwilling, even at their entrance on their work, to live or preach in small country places. When the admirable Doddridge left his tutor, Mr. Jennings, he received two invitations to the pastorate—one from Coventry, and another from Kibworth. It is stated that he chose Kibworth, principally on account of his youth, and that he might pursue his studies with greater advantage. As the congregation

was small, and he lived in an obscure village, he had ample time for study, and he prosecuted it with great assiduity; and it is well known that he reflected on it with the utmost pleasure during life, that he had spent so many years in a station of quiet and rural retirement.

Shortly after his settlement at Kibworth, one of his fellow-students wrote, condoling with him on being *buried alive*—but Doddridge responded—“Here I stick close to those delightful studies, which a favourable Providence has made the business of my life. One day passeth away after another, and I only know that it passeth pleasantly with me. As for the world about me, I have very little concern with it. I live almost like a tortoise, shut up in its shell; almost always in the same town (village), the same house, the same chamber; yet, I live like a prince; not, indeed, in the pomp of greatness, but the pride of liberty; master of my books, master of my time, and, I hope I may add, master of myself.” “Instead of lamenting it as my misfortune, you should congratulate me upon it as my happiness, that I am confined to an obscure village, seeing it gives me so many valuable advantages to the most important purposes of devotion and philosophy, and, I hope I may add, usefulness too.” Here he studied and composed his expositions and sermons with great care and exactness—transcribed almost every one of them in the neatest manner, and thus contracted a habit of preaching judiciously, when his other business would not allow so much time for composition.

In this respect, how desirable it is that Doddridge should be, by young ministers, frequently and closely imitated. It would greatly conduce to their comfort, improvement, and future usefulness.

5. Prior to accepting any charge have the *advice of your tutors*, and, if possible, of the neighbouring *pastors*.

Lay the case before your tutors. Mention all the prominent circumstances. Specify what you may deem to be the

advantages and disadvantages. Do nothing without consulting with them—without soliciting their opinion—without being governed, in a great degree, by their calmly-expressed sentiments. They are wise men, and you will have a wise decision. They are men who know you thoroughly, and you cannot, in a matter of so much moment, conduct yourself more properly than by placing yourself under their direction. Besides, it is natural to suppose that, at such a period, you will defer to them, and seek to have the benefit of their counsel and prayers. We have rarely found that young ministers have succeeded, as pastors, who have repudiated the advice of their judicious and holy tutors, with regard to undertaking or declining particular stations in the church of God. Make a *special friend* of each of your tutors on an occasion of such deep solemnity, and of so critical a character; request, most earnestly, the dispassionate opinion of men so attached to their students, and so anxious for their future welfare and usefulness; and, sure we are, that you will never regret deferring to their judgment, and being regulated by their unbiased and sagacious advice.

It is of great importance, also, previously to accepting a call, that you should consult the *neighbouring pastors*—those, especially, who are the most judicious and influential. They, perhaps, have long been intimately acquainted with the church and congregation soliciting your pastoral labours; their advice to you may not only be important but invaluable. They may give you hints of unspeakable advantage; they may disclose circumstances to you of great moment, which otherwise, *after* settling, you might deeply regret you had not known *previously*.

A settlement in the ministry, and, especially, at the commencement of your *regular* labours, is of such consequence, that all the knowledge which you can acquire of any society, prior to determining to be its pastor, you will find of value, and often of incalculable importance.

Seek, then, the *best* counsel, before you reply definitely

to *any* call, especially your *first*; and let your able and honoured tutors be consulted, just as a child, in any case of difficulty and moment, would wish to consult his parents. It is good, in such a matter as that to which we now recur, to have the very best advice you can gain.

6. Previously to accepting a call, *ascertain the character of the deacons.*

This, to you, will be of great importance, and, in the discharge of pastoral engagements, you will realise continually the truth of our observation. Is it not most desirable that the deacons of the church, from which you receive an invitation, should be men of kindred spirit with you? Is it not most important that they should be holy men, possessed, indeed, of eminent sanctity? Is it not much to be desired, that they should be men whose religious views are accordant with your own? That they should be men marked by their judicious and uniformly prudent conduct? That they should be men of liberal and benevolent disposition? That they should be men of kind and condescending demeanour, ready to notice the poorest and the youngest of the flock? That they should be men of activity and energy?—men *fully approving* your settlement among the people—determined to promote your comfort, and to aid you in all your plans and labours of love? You cannot, before you accept any pastorate, be too well informed on this point. Ignorance, or mistakes, in relation to this matter, may be of the most serious consequence.

Observe the character of the officers of the church with closeness and discrimination, that your judgment may be accurate, and that you may not be subsequently deceived, or involved in difficulty. Mark the leading theological sentiments which they may entertain—the habits they form—the tempers they display. A similarity of doctrinal views, and of disposition to your own, you will find of incalculable importance. Your happiness may be effectually

marred by having *one* of the deacons against you, especially if he be possessed of wealth, and considerable influence in the society; or by having any of the officers of the church lax in their doctrinal sentiments—restless, capricious, fond of novelty—dictatorial, arrogant, domineering. If you wish to be happy, when you settle, regard this point most earnestly *before* you accept an invitation.

7. Prior to entering on the pastoral relation, *review all the circumstances* which led you to visit the place from which you receive a call.

There are the leadings of Divine Providence directing a young minister to a particular station, and directing him, often, as clearly as though an audible voice were pronounced from heaven. Endeavour to ascertain these guiding and controlling influences of Providence. Sit down, and calmly ruminate on the manner in which you were led to visit any station in “the vineyard of the Lord”—the circumstances which first induced you to undertake to preach the Gospel to the people—your first acquaintance with them—the spirit in which they received you—and the various and interesting steps by which you were gradually drawn among them. Then, after dispassionately and seriously reviewing these things, look up to God for His *especial direction*, that you may not err—that you may not take a wrong step—that you may not judge by sense, rather than by faith and a supreme regard to the Word of God—that you may not seek a liberal stipend, an important sphere, a genteel and opulent congregation, rather than a field of usefulness, the conversion of souls, and the advancement of the glory of the Saviour. You cannot weigh these matters too carefully or devoutly; and let it be with you a golden rule,—a rule in entering on any pastorate,—to follow Providence, and not to force it. Then, you will have light afforded, and “the pillar of cloud” will be sure to conduct you, wisely and infallibly.

8. Before you undertake any pastorate, learn the *true character and condition of the church*.

Ascertain this, not from others exclusively, or principally, but from your own observation. Learn whether the church by which you are invited, be

A *holy* church,—living under the influence of holy principles, breathing holy tempers, maintaining holy discipline, abounding in holy efforts.

A church whose *religious sentiments* are scripturally correct—simple, transparent, undisguised—in unison with your own views of truth; and be sure to ascertain that there is little or no “antinomian leaven” in the society.

Learn whether it be a *peaceful* church.—A church quiet, amiable, pacific—catholic in its temper—cherishing an uniform desire to preserve the unity of the spirit in the bond of peace.

Learn if it be an *affectionate* church.—Governed by love—walking in love—large and generous in its regards—baptised into the spirit of holy love.

See if it be a *flourishing* church.—Developing great principles—abounding in “the fruits of the Spirit, increasing with all the increase of God.”

Learn whether it be a *working* church.—A church full of life and energy, exhibiting that enlightened and holy ardour, without which there can be no blessing—and determined not to be idle or apathetic.

If the church by which you may be invited develop the above characteristics—if they be clearly and broadly unfolded by it—do *not hesitate* with regard to settling among such a people, though the society may, perhaps, not be so numerous as you could desire. Your comfort will be studied. Your peace of mind will be promoted. Your services will be valued. Your opinions and wishes will be regarded. Your usefulness will be secured. Such a people will be “your hope, your joy, your crown of rejoicing.”—(1 Thessalonians ii. 19.)

9. When settled, be *very careful about removing*.

After accepting an invitation to the pastorate, do not resolve, as many do, most unwisely and improperly, that the sphere of labour shall be occupied only for a short period, probably, only for two or three years. This is very injudicious and undesirable, and the mind is kept continually unsettled. When you determine on occupying a station, resolve, if it be the will of God, that you will live and die with the people. Commence your engagements as though you intended permanently remaining with them. Do not cherish a roving disposition. Go steadily on, endeavouring to do all the good in your power. Wait the course of events. See how God is prospering your efforts. And if, unhappily, it be necessary, eventually, to remove, let your conscience be *fully satisfied* that you are doing what is right—what the Word of God will sanction. Let it be palpable to your mind that God is leading you. Thus the majority of the society—at any rate, the most candid and discriminating—may be convinced that you are in the path of duty, by retiring from them.

Do not wish to leave, or think of leaving a church, on every inconsiderable and trifling ground. See that your reasons, before such a step be taken, are *most conclusive*. “A long-standing connexion,”* as an excellent minister observes, “does credit both to the pastor and the church.” Andrew Fuller, by a rough but striking metaphor, remarks, in one of his letters, that “many of our modern preachers seemed stung with the gad-fly.” Remember that in *every* situation there are trials. We are acquainted with those in our present circumstances, and they press us—but those of a new condition are unfelt, and even unknown; yet they may be equally, and even more, numerous and painful. When a man changes often, there is danger of his getting not only the character, but *the habit* of a changing; and a rolling stone gains no moss; and a tree always

* Jay.

transplanting cannot radicate, so as to be firm, vigorous, and fruitful.

Therefore, when once you settle, *settle*:—remain;—and do not consider yourself moveable—unfixed by every little contrariety of circumstances. You may give up your station, and remove from your proper sphere; you may leave your usefulness behind you, and never be happy again.

Finally, previously to settling, remember, and weigh it well, that the connexion which you are about to form *peculiarly regards the Day of God*.

All other relations, however interesting and important, are identified with time only, and derive nearly all their value and comfort from the present world; but the connexion between a minister and his flock is designed for eternity, and its weightiest and most solemn results issue in the world beyond the grave. Eternity will unfold all—will consummate all:—and what a revelation! what a consummation! Ever think of this before you settle in the ministry. It will wisely direct—it will deeply impress—it will lead to prayer—it will induce you to cast yourself, and all your solicitude, on your infinitely compassionate Redeemer, who will show you the way which you are to pursue.

Previously, then, to taking so serious a step as that of accepting the pastoral charge, sit down, and ponder the results of such a step—that they stretch forward to eternity, and will develop all their magnitude, exert all their power, unfold all their tremendous importance there. Every sermon you preach to your flock will bear on eternity. Every prayer you present on their behalf—for their happiness and salvation—will be associated with eternity. Every invitation you tender to them, every admonition you offer to them, every appeal you make to them, will be identified with eternity—will be connected with your appearance before God, and that of your charge.

Therefore, before accepting any call, let this solemn thought be long and profoundly dwelt on. It is of transcendent moment — of ineffable seriousness, and cannot be too anxiously and earnestly regarded.

You cannot enter on the pastorate aright—you cannot settle wisely and happily, and have God with you, unless these views are taken—these great principles are recognised—and every effort be made, in reliance on Divine agency, to let them be exemplified in undertaking the pastoral relation. Then you may calculate on ministerial happiness—then you may fairly augur that some degree of success in “the vineyard” will be your portion—then you may conclude that “the Lord of Hosts will be with you, and that the God of Jacob will be your refuge.”—(Psalm xlv. 11.)

CHAPTER IX.

COUNSELS ON ORDINATION.

THERE is no service in which a young minister can be engaged, which is more deeply interesting and impressive than an ordination service, and especially *his own ordination*. The day of his designation to the pastoral office is indisputably one of the most eventful days of his history. Then he publicly, and in the most deliberate and solemn manner, consecrates himself to the work which his Divine Lord requires him stately to perform. Then he makes an explicit and an ample confession of his faith before many enlightened and well-qualified witnesses. Then he enters, more decidedly and fully, on the arduous and momentous undertaking which is to occupy his unceasing attention. Then he resolves, more earnestly than ever, to be the Lord's, and to concentrate his powers and capacities, whatever they may be, in the Divine service. Then he throws himself, as it were, on the liberal feelings, the generous sympathies, and the Christian principles of his people, while he affectionately exhorts them to "follow him, so far as he follows Christ," and to remember that he is their shepherd, to guide them—their friend, to counsel them—their instructor, under God, to enlighten and edify them—and their leader in their journey towards eternity, to conduct them, by the direction and agency of the Holy Spirit, to the Paradise above, the rest of immortality.

On the day of a minister's ordination there are feelings of a very peculiar character awakened; there are sensibilities of the most delicate and affecting kind excited; there are anxieties and fears of the most solemn, and sometimes of the

most depressing nature inspired ; there are energies aroused, with marked decision and power ; there are prayers presented with unusual fervour and simplicity of purpose ; and there are impressions produced which are exceedingly vivid in themselves, and permanent in the influence which they exert over the mind and character. And, therefore, when a Christian minister, accredited by the professors of the college in which he has been educated, by his piety and qualifications for the work to which he is devoted, and by the cordial and unbiased suffrages of the church, undertakes, after solemn deliberation and prayer, regularly to fill any station in the vineyard of the Lord, where there is ample scope for labour and usefulness, and to which, he believes, the Saviour has sent him—and especially when the day of his ordination arrives, his ministerial friends and brethren around, and, among them, the senior pastors, will be desirous of sanctioning his appointment by their presence, and of expressing their solicitude for his happiness and prosperity in the church of God. Thus, attending his ordination, they will encircle his person, show him that he is not in an isolated position ; they will greatly encourage him by their kind feelings, and stimulate him in his labours by the assurances of their fraternal regard ; they will much cheer him by the fervid and united petitions which they present on his behalf ; and they will exhort the people over whom he is called to preside, to strive with him for the faith of the Gospel, to “esteem him very highly in love for his work’s sake,” and to do all which they possibly can, so that his anxieties may be diminished, his church be enlarged, and the cause of God committed to his care abundantly prosper in his hands.

An ordination service, in every view which we can take of it, is exceedingly important. It is so, pre-eminently, when its *character* and *design* are contemplated. If the inquiry be proposed, what is meant by an ordination service?—in other words, what is the design, or object, of the ordination

of a minister? we would concisely reply—it is simply a designation, a public and formal designation to office; not an appointment to the Christian ministry—not a permission given to preach the Gospel—but a recognition of entrance on the office of the pastorate.

We read, in the Acts of the Apostles, of Paul and Barnabas, on their second visit to Lystra, Iconium, and Antioch, that “when they had ordained them elders in every church, and had prayed, with fasting, they commended them to the Lord, on whom they had believed.”—(Acts xiv. 23.) Paul tells Titus—1st chapter, 5th verse—“For this cause left I thee in Crete, that thou shouldest set in order the things that are wanting, and *ordain elders in every city*, as I had appointed thee.”

Ordination is not necessary *prior* to preaching the Gospel; but it is very desirable and important, after a minister has been regularly invited to undertake the oversight of any church, that he should be specifically *set apart* to the office of the pastorate, in connexion with that society.

We regard ordination, then, as being simply a recognition of office in the Christian church. It is the setting apart, in a regular and scriptural manner, those holy and accredited servants of Jesus Christ, who are called by the members of churches to preside over them in the Lord,—their public designation to particular stations in “the vineyard,” which they are spontaneously and affectionately requested to occupy. “It is, therefore, not an initiation into the Christian ministry, but into the pastoral office.” On the duties of the pastorate they are cordially invited to enter by the members of those churches to whom, for a shorter or longer period, they have administered the Word of Life, and who consider that they have been sent to them, in the arrangements of Divine providence, by God himself; and that they are qualified to speak to them, on the great subjects of the Gospel, with clearness, ability, and power; and who cherish the conviction that, by the blessing of

Heaven, their ministry will be rendered permanently useful to their souls, and those of others.

The approval of the people, their unbiased and cordial election, in the case of ministers of the Gospel, must, according to our views, be deemed necessary prior to ordination; still, "it is not ordination itself." They are first chosen to the office of the pastorate—then, in a regular and appropriate manner, inducted to it.

We have a clear and succinct statement of the mode of procedure in the New Testament, in the institution of the office of deacons.—(Acts, 6th chapter, from the second verse.) The apostles reminded "the multitude of the disciples" that it was not reasonable, not becoming or proper, that they should "leave the Word of God, and serve tables." "Wherefore, brethren," said they, "look ye out among you seven men, of honest report, full of the Holy Ghost and wisdom, whom *we may appoint* over this business. But we will give ourselves continually to prayer, and to the ministry of the Word." The saying pleased the whole multitude, and they chose Stephen, a man full of faith and of the Holy Ghost, and Philip, and Prochorus, and Nicanor, and Timon, and Parmenas, and Nicolas, a proselyte of Antioch, "whom they," namely, the disciples, "set before the apostles; and, when they had prayed, they laid their hands on them."

We learn, also, from other passages in the Acts, that the apostles ordained, or set apart, elders to the churches. They appointed to the oversight of particular churches those who, by the suffrages of the disciples, were chosen to "watch for their souls, as those who must give account." Thus, these elders, or presbyters, were not ordained by their fellow-disciples, but by the apostles.

The Divine Saviour, who is King in Zion, is a lover of order. Everything in His church is to be done decently, becomingly, and in order; and how necessary is this to be regarded, in the case of the appointment of His ministers. "He has, therefore, intimated to us His will, that every

Christian bishop should be regularly initiated into his office; and to this initiation the New Testament, it is apprehended, gives the name of ordination."

Ordination can take place *once only*. A minister of Jesus Christ cannot be twice ordained. It is not merely unnecessary, but it is at variance with the Scriptures; and it is also an insult to him—to every just and enlightened dictate of his mind. When the great John Howe was introduced, at an affecting period in his history, to Dr. Seth Ward, bishop of Exeter, his lordship received him with the utmost politeness, and treated him as an old acquaintance. He soon, however, began to use the freedom of an old acquaintance, by expostulating with him on his nonconformity. Like Bishop Wilkins, he asked him his *reasons*. Howe replied that, without taxing his lordship's patience beyond all decency, he could not give such an account of his objections as justice to himself required. The bishop then requested him to mention *any one* of the points at which he scrupled. On this Howe specified *re-ordination*. "Pray, Sir," said the bishop, "what *hurt* is there in being *twice* ordained?" "*Hurt*, my lord," rejoined Howe, "*it hurts my understanding*; the thought is shocking; it is an absurdity, since nothing can have two beginnings. I am sure I am a minister of Christ, and am ready to debate that matter with your lordship, if your lordship pleases; but I cannot *begin again* to be a minister."* These are just and noble sentiments, worthy of the holy man and great divine who gave them utterance.

When a minister removes from one field of labour to another, the business or custom of ordination, distinct and solemn setting apart, to that particular sphere of pastoral solicitude and exertion, is by no means *essential*. It is desirable certainly, if arrangements can be made, that he should be publicly *recognised* as the pastor of the church calling him, but more for the sake of the ministers and

* Vide Howe's Life, by Rogers, pages 151, 152.

churches around, than for his own sake. It is expedient; it may be beneficial—and, in some instances, important—but it is not absolutely necessary.

It has been remarked, with equal justness and discrimination, that, “To initiate a man into the pastoral office who already sustains it, is a *gross anomaly*. His *primary* ordination, which qualified him to discharge pastoral duties among the people who chose him to that work, gave him a right or title, according to the appointment of the Great Head of the Church, to discharge those duties generally. To *re-ordain* him, is to cast contempt upon, and to vitiate *the previous* proceeding; a mode of conduct which it becomes the disciples of Christ steadily to avoid. To take the opportunity, which is frequently done, of *reminding* the pastor and the church of their respective duties, is another thing;—that is allowable, and generally desirable, but to proceed further is clearly unauthorised.” These are sentiments, to the truth and importance of which we perfectly subscribe.

Whether the ordination of a minister, in imitation of the practice of the apostles, should be observed with the imposition of the hands of the presbyters who may be present, is a question which, to us, is comparatively immaterial. Considerable diversity of opinion, we are aware, prevails on the subject. Some deem it desirable and proper, in unison with apostolic and primitive usage; while others regard it as a custom savouring of priestly assumption, which should be by no means sanctioned, especially by Protestant Dissenters; and that it almost wears the semblance of certain gifts and powers being communicated by the performance of the act. We take, in no degree, the extreme views entertained by some objectors. Still, we consider that the observance or non-observance of the custom must be left open. Our decided opinion is, that it should remain entirely with the minister himself, who is about to be ordained. If he would prefer having the hands of the officiating and other pastors who are present resting on his head, while the ordination

prayer is being offered, and they concur, we see no objection to it; though, at the same time, in our judgment, there is no necessity for it. It may be misinterpreted and abused; and in very many instances, now, on ordination occasions, it is omitted.

The imposition of the hands of the presbyters can be connected with no virtue—can be associated with the endowment, or increase, of no gifts or graces. It is simply an act—a solemn one, we admit—by which, while the ordination prayer is being presented to God, on behalf of the young minister set apart, the pastors who are present place their hands on the head of him who is ordained, to show their deep interest in this touching and important part of the service, and their intense anxiety that the Head of the Church would communicate every blessing which he may require, in his personal, domestic, and, especially, *official* character.

The results of an ordination service, if well conducted, are:—

To impress the mind of the young pastor more deeply with a sense of the solemnity and importance of his work; to enable him to realise, more vividly than before, that no undertaking is more serious, gigantic, responsible.

To bind him more closely and affectionately to his people; to heighten the endearment existing between him and his flock; on his part, so sacred and tender—on theirs, so strong, so holy, and so confiding.

To induce him to present more fervid prayer than ever, that he may be aided in his arduous enterprise—discharge his pastoral engagements aright—breathe the Christian spirit—discover the temper of the thoughtful, prudent, holy, and devoted servant of the Redeemer—in every sense, make full proof of his ministry, and be rendered useful to numbers of immortal souls.

Taking, then, the solemn and elevated views which we do of an ordination service, we would affectionately and earnestly address to every young minister who is about to be ordained the few subjoined counsels:—

1. Anticipate your ordination with *deep seriousness*.

Your emotions can scarcely be too profound or intense, in the prospect of such a service. You cannot be too solicitous that you may regard it appropriately; that you may form large, scriptural, realising views of the service itself—of its character—of its design—of the obligations which are associated with it—of its tendencies and results.

In the expectation of this event, sit down, and ruminate in the following manner:—"I am going shortly to be publicly set apart to the office of the Christian pastorate; 'holy men of God' will be coming from various places to take respective parts in my ordination service; fervent and importunate prayer will be presented for me, that I may be 'an able minister of the New Testament,' a faithful and devoted pastor, a useful and honoured servant of Jesus Christ; and that I may maintain my sincerity, fidelity, purity, energy, and usefulness, until the Master shall come, and require me to give a minute account of my stewardship.

"What a work is that on which I am about formally and regularly entering! How important is the relation which will be recognised before 'a cloud of witnesses!' How solemn and responsible the duties which I shall have, at all times, and, unless my health fail, till the close of life, to perform! How deep and peculiar the anxieties which I shall have to experience! How numerous and affecting the changes among my people, with which, in the course of years, I shall be familiar!

"How fearful will be the consequences of my ministry to some—how joyous and inspiring to others! Let me, then, enter on the duties of the pastoral relation with feelings of deep and continually growing seriousness. Let there be no levity of character—no volatility of thought and purpose—nothing but what is sober, grave, dignified, becoming the office itself, and the results which will inevitably flow from the performance of its duties!"

If your ordination be anticipated in this manner, it will

be expected under the influence of the right spirit, and a blessing will be infallibly connected with it.

2. Let your ordination be prepared for with *much prayer*.

In the anticipation of an event, so solemn in itself, and involving consequences so momentous and awful, no spirit is so important, so necessary, as the spirit of prayer—that prayer which springs from a profound sense of your dependance on God, which is governed simply by his Word, and which “takes hold,” as it were, “of his strength.” And nothing will you find to be more beneficial. It will tranquillise your mind, while you are looking forward to the day of your ordination; it will enable you to preserve a holy elevation of thought and feeling in its immediate anticipation, and, in the exercise of filial and unwavering confidence, you will “cast all your care” on that compassionate and omnipotent Redeemer, who can sustain you, and who has assured you that He will succour and console.

You will require much prayer on the day of your ordination, that you may be borne happily through one of the most anxious and trying services in which you can possibly be engaged; that you may enter, also, into the spirit of your high and arduous duties—and that you may gain a large and adequate supply of that “wisdom which is profitable to direct”—that grace which is necessary to support—that consolation which is requisite to encourage and bless you. Never, then, recur to your ordination service without devotional thoughts being awakened—devotional feelings being inspired—devotional and fervid aspirations being directed to your God and Saviour. You cannot be fitted for your ordination, unless a spirit of abounding and wrestling prayer be developed and cultivated by you.

3. Let your theological sentiments, and your purposes in relation to the exercise of your ministry, be clearly and fully stated on the day of your ordination.

This is very important, and must claim your marked attention. In being present at the ordination of Christian ministers, no part of the service has interested us more deeply, or produced a more lasting impression, than that in which the young pastor details his religious experience—the means by which he has been brought to God—makes what is termed his confession of faith—and communicates his intentions with regard to the future exercise of his ministry. It is a part of the service which is always anticipated by the audience with eagerness—which always secures marked attention—which always awakens powerful emotion—and often produces permanent effects.

We would, therefore, earnestly counsel every young minister to be *faithfully explicit* on the points to which we have been alluding. See, we entreat you, that the exposition of your theological sentiments, furnished at your ordination service, be simple, clear, comprehensive, and scriptural;—let it be calculated to give satisfaction to every candid, enlightened, and holy mind. Let it be expressed, as much as possible, in the language of the Word of God. Let there be no uncertainty—no ambiguity—no mysticism—no mere philosophising. And, in stating your intentions with regard to your future plans and endeavours, let the audience, at your ordination, observe your modesty—your wisdom—your fidelity—your love of souls—your ardent desires to do good—your entire reliance on Divine agency—your determination to honour the Saviour. It will greatly prepossess the ministers and members of other churches, who are present, in your favour. It will tell most powerfully on the minds and hearts of your own people, and by some of them, in all probability, will never be forgotten. They may date their conversion from the period to which we refer.

4. Bear in mind the *obligations* which are imposed on you by your ordination.

By the *confession of faith* which you have made;—the

great principles which you recognise as divine and unspeakably important—to which you have given distinct and emphatic utterance—and which are to be prominently unfolded in your ministry.

Obligations imposed by *the vows* into which you have entered in private; when, amidst the silence and secrecy of the closet, you have spread your sentiments and your desires before the Lord, and expressed to him, in the most undisguised manner, the intentions of the mind, and the purposes of the heart.

Obligations increased by *the prayers* which have been presented, that you might enter into the spirit of your office, that you might be prepared for the adequate discharge of your duties, that you might be rendered useful to immortal souls, and discover blended wisdom, fidelity, and love, unto the end.

Obligations which ought to be more deeply felt, by *the resolutions* which you have publicly expressed—by the deliberate and solemn manner in which you have stated, that you will live to labour for your people—to win them to Christ—to exert yourself, in every possible way, for the happiness and extension of the church, and the advancement of the glory of your Lord.

These are the obligations resting on you, and which you are bound to regard, to appreciate, to honour. And, remember, that these obligations will be *ever* pressing upon you—that they are fixed, immutable—that they cannot be relaxed in the slightest degree—and that it is impossible for you to be indifferent to their fulfilment, without dishonouring the Saviour—proving a recreant to your prayers and your vows—and acting most unworthily of the sacred trust which is communicated to you.

5. Be determined on the day of your ordination to labour thenceforward more assiduously than ever to benefit the people.

Let it be the commencement of a new era in your existence—a period when you resolve most fervently in God's strength to do all the good to the souls of your flock, which you can be the instrument of communicating. Resolve to benefit them,

By *studying for their advantage*, not for your own recreation and delight—not for the enlargement and vigour of your own mind—not for the gratification of ardent and long cherished desires after learning and intellectual culture. In studying, day after day, with closeness and constancy, you must regard your people, and make all your acquisitions and mental efforts bear *immediately* on their instruction, their religious progress, the advancement of their spiritual and eternal interests.

By preaching in such a manner as that they may be *edified*;—with simplicity of language—with clearness of statement—with point and fulness of scriptural illustration—with a distinct exhibition of the great subjects of Christianity—with persuasiveness of appeal—with affectionate and fervent solicitude that their happiness and establishment in the faith of Christianity may be secured.

By *praying for their salvation*;—remembering them, in the most earnest manner, when you enter your closet—considering their cases, and distinctively mentioning them before the Lord—pleading, especially, on behalf of the aged, the young, sincere and anxious inquirers, the careless, the dead in trespasses and sins. In a word,

By labouring in such a way as that, under God, you cannot labour in vain;—with holy diligence—with singleness of aim—with the utmost elevation of thought and feeling—with apostolic fidelity and benevolence—determined “to spend and be spent,” that your flock may be drawn to Jesus Christ.

Observe how Doddridge felt and expressed himself, when he was ordained at Northampton:—“I cannot but admire the goodness of God to me, in thus accepting me in the office of a minister, who do not deserve to be owned by him

as one of the meanest of His servants. But I firmly determine, in the strength of Divine grace, that I will be faithful to God, and the souls committed to my charge; and that *I will perform* what I have so solemnly sworn. If I know anything of my heart, I apprehend I may adopt the words of the apostle, that it is 'my earnest expectation and hope, that in nothing I shall be ashamed, but that Christ shall be magnified in my body, whether it be by life or by death; that to me to live is Christ, and to die unspeakable gain.' May this day never be forgotten by me, nor the dear people committed to my charge, whom I would humbly recommend to the care of the Great Shepherd!" *

6. When ordained, consider that the people before whom you are set apart, are specially *your flock*.

They are the people with whom you are the most intimately connected, and in whose welfare you should be personally and deeply interested. They constitute your immediate charge. They are to be regarded by you as the trust which God has committed to you, and he says to you, in your new and responsible position,—“occupy till I come.”

The progress and elevation of your flock, in everything that is holy and divine, will redound to your honour, as their shepherd; but their ignorance, their errors, their sins, their miseries, if at all to be attributed to your carelessness or neglect, will reflect on you deep disgrace. Do not, then, regard your people as comparative strangers. Do not view them with indifference and apathy. Do not contemplate their character, situation, and prospects, with little interest. Let your flock see that you are anxious for their welfare—that you are cordially attached to them, and that it is your ruling desire that they may be your “glory and joy.” They will appreciate this spirit. They will value you, because you value them. They will be interested in your happiness, and the truly excellent and devoted to Christ among them will

* Orton's Life of Doddridge, pp. 80, 81.

be closely bound to you. Show your people, when ordained, that you not only live among them, but *for* them; and that your studies are pursued, your acquirements are consecrated, your energies are concentrated, to do them good.

Let your church and congregation invariably perceive that you prefer them to any other society—that you are more solicitous respecting the people of your choice than respecting those who are strangers to you. When once your flock see that you are indifferent to them, they will be indifferent to you; thus, your comfort will be impaired, and your usefulness will be checked. Let the spirit of sincere and cordial regard, expressed at your ordination, be assiduously cultivated. Let it never be suffered to languish or decline. Watch against anything bordering on coldness.

In reading the lives of Matthew Henry and Doddridge, nothing strikes us more than the interest which they continually felt in their people—the solicitude which they cherished for their comfort, harmony, and usefulness; it was profound, most affectionate, and absorbing. It is stated, with regard to that excellent minister, the Rev. George Osborne, of Worcester, that he so respected and valued his people, that no solicitations of friends, when health permitted his attendance, could induce him to be absent from the scene of his duties, either on the evening of the monthly united prayer meeting for the spread of the Gospel, or on the Sabbath usually observed for the celebration of the Lord's Supper. Imitate such a man, and plainly exhibit to your flock that you are reluctant to leave them, even for a season; that you value them before all others, and consider it your happiness to serve them.

7. Endeavour to preserve within you the feelings and impressions awakened by your ordination service.

Probably there never was a period when you felt more intensely than at your ordination. The whole soul was affected, and in a manner in which it had rarely been affected

before. There was a train of thought induced, and a class of feelings excited, peculiar in their character, and most powerful in their effect. Be anxious that those thoughts and emotions should be awakened continually; that there should be a stamp of permanence on them.

How desirable that those feelings of *solemnity*—of deep-toned and absorbing seriousness—which were inspired at your ordination service, should be continually cherished! What an effect would they produce in relation to all your ministerial and pastoral engagements!

How desirable that those feelings of *gratitude* which you then experienced should be kept alive within you, and poured forth, at all periods, with the utmost freshness and fervency!

How desirable that those emotions of *holy solicitude* on behalf of your flock, to which you then gave utterance, should be maintained;—that you may always feel for immortal souls, for miserable and lost sinners, as you then felt!

How desirable that that *elevated devotion*, by which you were characterised at your ordination, should be unceasingly kept up, so that you may be living continually with God, breathing the very atmosphere of devotion!

How desirable that that spirit of *filial confidence* which you then exercised, in the care, fidelity, and tenderness of your heavenly Father, should be always embodied in your life and ministry, so that you may uniformly find the grace of Christ Jesus to be sufficient for you!

How desirable that that *entire reliance on Divine agency* which you then felt should be invariably developed, that strength may be afforded equal to your day—that you may have succours from above, seasonably and adequately imparted—and that it may be seen that the Lord of Hosts is constantly with you, and that the God of Jacob is your all-sheltering Refuge!

8. Let the anniversary of your ordination be devoutly regarded by you, and seriously improved.

It is a day which you must ever keep most sacredly before you, viewing it as one of the most interesting and memorable days of your history—a day identified with the religious instruction and happiness, and, probably, with the conversion and salvation of numbers;—a day, too, whose engagements were registered in heaven, and which bore immediately, and with the deepest solemnity, on eternity—its awful scenes, its changeless realities. Keep, then, up, with undeviating punctuality, the anniversary of this day—that your original emotions, on its return, may be revived, and, if possible, increased; that your resolutions formed on that day may be renewed, and expressed with additional earnestness and vigour; that your love to your people may be augmented; and that your petitions for Divine help, direction, and encouragement, may be presented with fervour and importunity, ever fresh and efficacious.

The annual return of the day of his ordination was observed by the holy Doddridge, in his retired devotions, with peculiar solemnity. Thus he writes, on one of these occasions:—"It is this day fifteen years, since I have borne the pastoral office in the church of Christ. How many mercies have I received in this character! But, alas! how many negligences and sins have I to be humbled for before God! Yet, I can call him to record upon my soul, that the office is my delight, and I would not resign the pleasure of it for any price which the greatest prince upon earth could offer me."

Observe the following beautiful and important prayer, privately preferred by the apostolic Thomas Wilson, bishop of Sodor and Man, on the day when he was inducted to his high office:—

"In an humble and thankful sense of thy great goodness to a very sinful and very unworthy creature, I look up to thee, O gracious Lord and benefactor, who, from a low

obscurity, hast called me to this high office, for grace and strength to fit me for it. What am I, or what is my father's house, that thou shouldest vouchsafe us such instances of thy notice and favour? I am not worthy of the least of all the mercies which thou hast showed unto thy servant. O God, grant, that by a conscientious discharge of my duty I may profit those over whom I am appointed as thy minister, that I may make such a return as shall be acceptable to thee. Give me such a measure of thy Spirit, as shall be sufficient to support me under, and lead me through, all the difficulties I shall meet with. Command a blessing upon my studies, that I may make full proof of my ministry, and be instrumental in converting many to the truth. Give me skill and conduct, that, with a pious, prudent, and charitable hand, I may lead and govern the people committed to my care; that I may be watchful in ruling them, earnest in correcting them, fervent in loving them, and patient in bearing them. Bless every member of this church; support the weak, confirm and settle those who stand; and feed our flock, together with ourselves, through Jesus Christ, the Chief Shepherd. Be pleased to make me an instrument of great good to this church and people; and grant, that, when I have preached to, and governed others, I myself may not be lost, or go astray."

We would, in concluding this chapter, say to every young minister, let your ordination be thus anticipated, be thus prepared for, be thus improved, and it will be realised by you to be one of the most delightful and important services in which you can ever be engaged, connected with blessings the most precious, and followed by results the most auspicious and glorious.

CHAPTER X.

COUNSELS ON PLANS AND CONDUCT AFTER UNDERTAKING A CHARGE.

WHERE is the young minister, of correct thought, and devout emotion, who does not feel, and feel intensely, *after* his ordination service has terminated, and all the public excitement connected with that service has passed away? When he sits down in his study, to dwell on his situation, to ponder his duties calmly, and, as in the light of eternity, to survey his responsibilities, is he not oppressed, and almost overpowered, with the solitudes which are awakened, with the multitude of thoughts which crowd on his mind? While ruminating on the subject, his sentiments might be expressed in the following manner:—"A ministerial settlement has now, by me, been entered on. The regular and ever-recurring duties of the pastorate are now to be discharged. I am commencing a new era of my existence,—one of surpassing interest, solemnity, and moment. The *whole business* of the ministry is to be regarded, and uniformly performed by me, and I shall require singular wisdom from above—singular grace, out of 'the fulness of Christ,'—singular supports and consolations from the Gospel, that I may 'make full proof of my ministry.' The engagements of my office will be found by me, after all my preparations and qualifications for the work, most arduous, and increasingly important—involving the deepest anxiety from day to day. I shall invariably experience, if I think and feel as a minister of Christ should, that they are of transcendent moment in themselves, associated with results of inexpressible magnitude, and I shall

be continually sensible that I require pre-eminent diligence, prudence, wariness, humility, concentration of mind, reliance on Divine agency, and devotion of purpose to the great work which the Lord has assigned me by his grace to accomplish."

It has been beautifully observed, in the Life of Elias Cornelius, of America, "Perhaps there is no moment, in the life of a Christian minister, more intensely interesting than the *morning after* his public consecration to his work. The excitements of that consecration, which are, sometimes, as a sort of deceitful ballast to the soul, have passed away. The feeling of responsibility comes with oppressive weight. The eternal interests of hundreds and thousands, for which he is, in a fearful sense, accountable, are now to form a part of his daily care. How far he shall be sustained, by the fervent prayers and generous co-operation of Christians in his flock, he does not know. The supplications which went up to God, when they were 'wandering as sheep without a shepherd,' may prove as the winter brooks of the Arabian desert. The minister has now the *naked consciousness* that he is 'an ambassador for Christ.' He has been designated to stand between 'the dead and the living;' while over his path, in his study, and around his bed, is He whose 'eyes are as a flame of fire.' Such a moment furnishes a test, we had almost said, infallible, of the *true character* of the minister. Is his piety such as will lift him above these depressing thoughts, and make him 'run in the way of God's commandment?' Or does he begin to feel that he has assumed an irksome task; that the spirit, which has hitherto sustained him, was the mere breath of popular applause?"

The sentiments involved in the above passage are as just and sagacious in themselves as they are powerfully expressed, and they cannot be too seriously contemplated by every young minister, after his ordination.

That their spirit may be exemplified—that the dignity of the pastoral office may be maintained—that its obligations may be fulfilled—that its usefulness and efficacy may be secured,

and continually promoted—the following counsels are affectionately and earnestly submitted to young ministers, in relation to the plans to be formed, the arrangements to be diligently pursued, the temper to be exhibited, and the conduct to be discovered, subsequently to ordination, while quietly and perseveringly discharging the duties of the ministerial undertaking.

I. After your ordination, *apply vigorously to study.*

You will do comparatively nothing in the pastorate, without this habit. You will secure no continued regard from the intelligent and reflective in your congregations, you will command no weight. Your services will not increase in acceptableness and efficiency; indeed, you will not be able long to maintain your position. When ordained to the ministry, you must be determined to labour—and not merely in the pulpit, but in *the study*; and in the study in the first instance, that your services in the pulpit may commend themselves to the judgments and hearts of your people, and become increasingly interesting and efficacious. Lay it down, as an indubitable principle, that to be instructive, pleasing, powerful, and continually useful preachers, you must be diligent and indefatigable students. While communicating so much regularly to others, endeavouring to enlighten and benefit them, you must be constantly putting what is valuable and precious into your own minds. In the present day, especially, nothing is done by ministers of the Gospel without study,—close, profound, continuous study. They must be men of reading, of patient inquiry, of deep reflection; and, if they do not form these habits, their services will not be greatly esteemed, their usefulness will not be extensive.

A ministry without reading, without study, without intelligence and devout thought, is an *inefficient* ministry. The hearers of the Gospel now are reflecting more than ever on the great subjects of Christianity, and it is of the first

importance that ministers of the Word should aid them in their meditations and inquiries; consequently, they must show their congregations that they are accustomed to form habits of patient and continued reflection—that they pursue a diligent course of reading—that they prosecute comprehensive and profound inquiries—and that they awaken and concentrate their faculties on the sublime and vital subjects unfolded in the Gospel. Young ministers cannot regard too carefully the above sentiments.

After your ordination, then, lay down a *fixed and enlightened plan of study*, and adhere to that plan as closely as possible. Do not embrace too much—still, let your range of thought and inquiry be wide, be ample.

Remember that you have, previously, only been *laying the foundation*, and that now, and throughout life, you are to be *rearing the superstructure*. Let not the building be narrow, inelegant, paltry; let it not be unfinished, or unsightly.

Remember that your stores of knowledge, on almost every subject, are to be *augmented*, and especially in connexion with divine subjects. The Bible is to be your book in the study, as well as in the pulpit—your book of reference, reflection, and appeal. It is always to elicit your inquiries—direct your inquiries with regard to human character and condition, and man's destiny beyond the grave;—in a word, it is to feed, enrich, and call forth your minds—invigorate and elevate all your faculties.

Remember that your *profiting* is to *appear* to your people. They are to see that your minds are being cultivated with increasing wisdom and care, and that you are becoming increasingly acquainted with the great principles, laws, and discoveries of Christianity. As years pass away, and your engagements perpetually return, how desirable it is that your flocks, severally, should be able to bear their testimony, in something like the following terms:—"Our minister is becoming, constantly, an abler divine—a better preacher—as well as a more useful and efficient pastor."

Remember that you are *to be prepared* for every situation, and for every emergency; and, unless you well improve your minds, and discipline your faculties, and be unceasing students of the Word of God, you will not be fitted for many duties to which you will often be called, and called *unexpectedly*, and for many situations of embarrassment and emergency in which you may be placed.

Remember, too, how important it is that the beneficial influence of your labours should be *constantly felt*, and be constantly augmented; and this cannot be realised, unless you are profound and devotional students of the Bible—unless you are well acquainted with its principles, and can expound its doctrines, illustrate its requirements, and administer its encouragements, in a wise, enlightened, and truly discriminating manner.

Pursue, after your ordination, a regular and systematic *course of reading*, and let it be diligently and unceasingly maintained. You will necessarily have, in the fulfilment of the duties of the pastorate, many interruptions; still, be determined to persevere in the habit of sound, thoughtful, truly useful reading. It will prove of inestimable value. Let your reading be various, yet not too excursive—and be *masters* of what you read.

Above all things, investigate the Scriptures, after your ordination, more closely, more profoundly, more devoutly than ever. Let your people see that you are “scribes well instructed in the mysteries of the kingdom;” able, with increasing clearness, to explain—and, with increasing power, to apply—the principles and lessons of the Word of God.

Acquire, also, a familiarity with the works of our great *olden divines*. You cannot consult their productions too frequently, or with too great care. You will find in them a simplicity—a point—an originality—an unction—a largeness and breadth of view—a richness and copiousness of illustration—an extent of theological learning—a boldness and

power of appeal—a fulness of evangelical doctrine—a practical sagacity and depth—which you will perceive scarcely anywhere else. Be most conversant with the works of Baxter and Charnock—Flavel and Owen—Bates and Manton—Hall and Hopkins—and, especially, with the compositions of the immortal Howe. Let the study of the writings of these holy men, and great divines, be your daily employment, and your minds will be continually enriched, while your hearts will be continually benefited.

To prosecute your studies efficiently, *rise early*. Do not form, at the outset of your ministry, sluggish and indolent habits. They are soon acquired, and, when acquired, how difficult to correct! Endeavour to secure *two hours* before breakfast for reading or composition. You will find those quiet hours of inestimable value, and, in the course of years, you will be surprised at the amount of your acquisitions.

Take care of *your mornings*. Secure them, if possible. They are the cream of the day. Four hours, from nine till one, you will find of incalculable worth. Indeed, *the work* of the day will be done during the morning. Then you will lay the foundation, and, often, rear the superstructure. Consider your morning hours as being sacred to yourselves—sacred to retirement, reading, and heavenly contemplation.

Guard against frittering away the hours of the morning in listless, idle, insignificant studies. Go to work in the morning with earnestness, and let your labours be marked by their appropriateness and importance.

Prevent interruptions as much as possible in the morning, and let it be known by your people that your mornings are devoted to continuous study; and, when this is generally ascertained, they would not be so inconsiderate and unwise, except in cases of necessity, to interrupt your reflections, or interfere with you in your preparations for the pulpit.

Let this be the motto of every young minister after his

ordination,—“ I must study hard to be acceptable—to maintain my self-respect—to secure a blessing from God.”

II. When ordained, *be very particular with regard to your sermons.*

This is of the utmost importance. If you are negligent or defective here, your usefulness will be impaired; your acceptance and respectability will soon be diminished. Let the *subjects* of your discourses be *very carefully* and *wisely selected*—after much reflection, study of the Scriptures, and prayer. Select those subjects which are the most simple, evangelical, experimental, and important; those in which the character of Christ is most clearly unfolded—in which the way of salvation is most fully exhibited—in which the work of the Holy Spirit is most impressively described—in which the inestimable value of spiritual blessings is most powerfully delineated. Avoid subjects which are involved, perplexing, controversial. Make a selection of the broad, direct, useful, grand subjects of the Gospel. They will always be interesting and attractive, and the most beneficial, unquestionably, to *every* class of your hearers.

See that your sermons are carefully composed. Let them not be crude, hasty, undigested productions. Never give your people that which costs you little or nothing. It is unwise; it is unjust; it is most improper, most ungrateful, most ruinous.

Let the outline of all your discourses be sketched with intelligence, distinctness, and precision, and be filled up in an appropriate and impressive manner.

Endeavour to *write fully out* one sermon every week, at least, paying the utmost attention to arrangement, illustration, and style. This habit will be of immense importance to you. It will improve your composition materially; it will give a fulness, an accuracy, a clearness, an elegance, a finish to your discourses, which, without writing, they will never unfold.

Let your sermons be as *varied* as possible. It will much increase the acceptance of your pulpit labours. Do not accustom yourselves to preach a number of discourses from *the same* text, or consecutively on the same subject.

Let your sermons be *adapted* to *your people*. Observe the character of those whom you statedly address. Study their minds; mark their situations and circumstances; scrutinise their habits; inquire what subjects they most need, and in what manner they should be treated and enforced. It is of great importance that your discourses should be distinguished by their appropriateness to the cases of your people.

Let your sermons be *rich in thought*, especially *evangelical* thought. Put as much into them as possible. Let there be a solidity, a vigour, a depth about them, which will always instruct and impress, and induce your people to say, "We have no tinsel, but pure and solid gold."

See that your sermons are calculated to *interest*; not dry, starched, cold—but pleasing, persuasive, attractive—fitted to arrest the attention and rivet the mind.

See that your discourses are *designed* and *greatly calculated to do good*. Let this be the broad character stamped on them. Let this be their specific object—this their uniform and necessary tendency. Let usefulness, in *all* your preaching, be your cherished desire, and your constant aim.

Be, every one of you, the *improving preacher*;—becoming increasingly simple, clear, intelligent, evangelical, persuasive, affectionate, and impressive. The more frequently you are heard, let it be spontaneously said by your audience respecting you, that the more you are esteemed and valued; and, if you are habitually careful with regard to your discourses—their subjects—their arrangement—their composition—their spirit—and the manner in which they are delivered, you will be respected by the intelligent and judicious; you will be acceptable to the pious and truly devout; and you

will be highly estimated by all whose minds are cultivated, whose views are scriptural, and whose judgment is deserving of regard.

III. Let the acquisition of *eminent holiness* be the object of your continual solicitude and supreme regard.

Nothing, be assured, will more fix the attention of your people than your piety—your love to God—your superiority of mind to the world—your consecration to the Divine service. *This* they will be always observing; and, if there be any deficiency in this respect, the power of your ministry will be proportionally weakened. Besides, nothing will be more attractive to those over whom you preside than *eminent sanctity*. When they perceive that your habits are eminently devotional, that you are surrounded by a holy atmosphere, and that you are pre-eminently cultivating the spirit of Jesus Christ—they will not only be interested and impressed, they will be charmed. Nothing will awaken emotions in their hearts more pleasurable. And this eminent holiness will impart a beauty to your ministry, and a power to your discourses, which scarcely anything else will command.

Your learning might be rich and varied, your intellectual endowments might be of the most splendid order, your oratorical powers might be of the highest character, but, were there a comparative destitution of holiness, of the spirit of Jesus Christ, would not their lustre be sadly dimmed—would not their beauty be mournfully impaired—would not their efficiency be nearly annihilated?

After your ordination, then, be exceedingly and increasingly anxious that *eminent piety* may be developed by you; that the holiness of the Gospel, in your principles, your habits, your temper, your conversation, your deportment, the most minute circumstances of life, may be clearly and beautifully unfolded. We are anxious that your ministry should have weight—therefore, there must be the

weight of character. We are solicitous that there should be great moral and religious influence, as well as that which is mental, exerted by you; therefore, it is our ardent desire that you may live very near to God, and cherish much of the spirit of heaven.

It is stated, with regard to the sainted and gifted Cornelius, that "he possessed, what we should name as the *fundamental* qualification; not so much, perhaps, the actual possession of extraordinary piety, as the belief, the consciousness, and, as it were, wrought into the very texture of his soul, that a minister must make the *acquisition of eminent holiness the great business of his life*; that, without a *large portion* of the spirit of his Master, he had better never draw near to the altar of God. This conviction was one of the main elements of his religious life. From the beginning, he wished to be the means of saving a multitude of souls from eternal death. He knew that this was impossible, without a clear apprehension of the nature of scriptural holiness, and a vigorous and an habitual pursuit of it himself. In his conversation he frequently alluded to it, and with such simplicity as convinced the auditors of his sincerity. Others, of less attainments in holiness, might acknowledge the same thing, when compelled to do it, in the exigences of preaching or ministerial intercourse, but it flowed from the lips of Mr. Cornelius as if it were the spontaneous feeling of his heart. The two books upon which he set a higher value than upon any others, after the Sacred Volume, were the *Memoirs of David Brainerd* and of *Samuel Pearce*; not that these men possessed a more cultivated taste than others, or that their lives were filled up with a greater variety of striking incident, but because they lived and walked with God." *

This must be your spirit. This must be your continual and supreme aim,—that you may be "perfect and complete in all the will of God;" expressing all the lovely features

* *Life of Cornelius*, pp. 116, 117.

of the Christian character; developing, in the most harmonious manner, the holy and elevated principles of the Gospel, in conjunction with those beauteous and godlike dispositions by which you will show that you are imitators of the Saviour, "as dear children;" and thus you will commend yourselves, in your ministry, to the most enlightened decisions of the judgments of your hearers, and to the most sacred feelings of their hearts.

It was the sage remark of one of the greatest speakers and writers,*—"I never knew a man who was bad fit for service that was good. There is always some disqualifying ingredient, mixing and spoiling the compound. The man seems paralytic on that side; his muscles there have lost their tone and character; they cannot move. The accomplishment of anything good is a physical impossibility for such a man. There is decrepitude as well as distortion. He could not, if he would, is not more certain than that he would not, if he could."

Let it, then, be your unceasing prayer and study, while discharging the duties of the pastoral relation, to exemplify the character of "holy men of God," and let every one be compelled to acknowledge that your character is marked by eminent sanctity and devotion. Remember that "the preacher may have, in mind and talent, the thews and muscles of a Samson, yet, without sanctity of character, his locks are shorn; he is powerless; he is despised and insulted."

IV. When ordained, *be especially marked by your prudence.*

This is often slightly regarded by young pastors; but, sure are we, that there is nothing which is more valuable, nothing more beneficial, and, indeed, nothing more necessary. If they wish to damage their reputation—to weaken the effect of their discourses—to diminish their acceptance

* Edmund Burke.

and respectability—and to annihilate the legitimate and hallowed influence of the Christian ministry, then they have only to be imprudent, obviously and habitually imprudent. How many young ministers of learning, of ability, of amiable qualities, and of piety, have impaired their usefulness, destroyed their efficiency, and have been compelled to remove from important positions in the church, not in consequence of any gross delinquency, but simply from their *imprudence*. Habitual imprudence has not only been their failing, their serious defect, but their sin. It has withered and destroyed like a blight. We would, therefore, earnestly counsel every young pastor, in the discharge of your regular and momentous duties, “*Be prudent! Be prudent!*” Not only guard against imprudence, but be pre-eminently marked by your prudence. Let it be always seen. Let it pervade everything in connexion with your procedure. Let it be correctly said by your people, respecting every one of you, and what can be a finer eulogy? ‘Our minister is a prudent man. He is always distinguished by his wisdom.’”

Be prudent in *all your plans*:—those which are formed and maintained for the government of the church—for the acceptance and usefulness of your ministry—for the general efficiency of your pastoral labours. It is mentioned, respecting that great and admirable man, Dr. Edward Williams, of Rotherham, that, as a pastor, his conduct in the management of church affairs was eminently distinguished by *prudence*. He never took the responsibility of any measure *wholly upon himself*, but always acted in concert with those *who bore office* in the church. By this means, whatever proposition he had to bring before his people, was invariably supported in the most eligible manner, while unanimity and peace were more effectually secured.

Be prudent in *your conversation*. You cannot be too cautious and wary in this respect. In your intercourse with your brethren in the ministry, the members of your own church and congregation, and members of other

churches, you must ever be most careful, most watchful. We would not impose undue restraints; still, remember, that even *incidental* remarks offered by you, which you threw out in the most casual manner, and have long since forgotten, will be treasured up by some, and prove, perhaps, very prejudicial against you. Do not always speak *just* as you feel. Do not disclose *all* your mind. There is *a time to be silent*, especially to be guarded. Know and observe that time. A *quiet tongue*, on the part of a young pastor, often discovers consummate prudence. There are some to whom you can scarcely open your minds; it is not safe to speak freely in their presence.

Be prudent in your *general conduct*. Guard against levity—against anything that is unbecoming the sacredness of your character, and the dignity of your office. Let all *the proprieties* of Christian and ministerial behaviour be exemplified by you, so that you may command respect wherever you go.

Be especially prudent in your intercourse with *the young*, and young persons of *the other* sex. In this respect you cannot be too wary. Let modesty, dignity, a discreet reserve, a holy blamelessness, in your intercourse with the younger members of your congregations, mark and beautify your conduct continually.

Remember that you cannot, in relation to these points, be too vigilant, for by *one act* of imprudence you might be unseated, and mar the benefit of your labours for life; and whatever your talents, or attractive qualities, in one single hour of temptation it is possible for you to blast your character, to ruin your public usefulness, and to render your warmest Christian friends ashamed of owning you.* Therefore, *be prudent*—habitually prudent. In the fulfilment of all the duties of the pastorate, discover “the wisdom of the serpent,” in beautiful combination with “the harmlessness of the dove.” It will add great weight to your ministry;

* Booth.

and your public discourses will command, by your uniform prudence, and marked Christian wisdom, as much power again, as when these fine qualities are comparatively neglected, or but slightly esteemed. "It was a pertinent advice which Paul gave to Titus, (Titus ii. 15,) however oddly it may appear at first,—‘Let no man *despise* thee.’ For we may justly say, that, in ninety-nine cases out of a hundred, if a pastor is despised, he has himself to blame.”*

V. After ordination, *be accessible to your people.*

Not that you are to encourage a gossiping propensity on the part of some; not that you are to suffer your hours to be interfered with by every caller or intruder; not that you are to allow your mornings, which should be devoted to close study, to be taken from you, or their value to be materially diminished by members of your congregation seeing you on comparatively indifferent matters. This we should altogether oppose. The time of a minister of the Gospel is sacred to himself—to his God—to the church over which he presides—to the interests of religion generally; and this should ever be seriously considered by members of churches, when they wish to see their pastors; so as to induce them to select suitable hours for calling, as well as guide them in relation to the period of their stay.

Still, while we administer this caution, we would earnestly say to you, *do be accessible to your flock.* Do not let it be stated by them, that you are unapproachable. Do not be shut up in the study, as though you were never to be seen, except in the pulpit to perform the accustomed services. This is the fault of many superior and excellent young ministers, and the result is, that the esteem of their people is diminished. They are not drawn towards their pastors. They rarely find that they can say one word to their ministers in *private*, and, in the course of time, they become cold, and almost estranged from them. They only know

* Dr. G. Campbell's Lectures on Ecclesiastical History.

their ministers in public life. They are not to be seen in their own houses, except with great difficulty, and, consequently, they are checked in going to their pastors to unfold their minds, to communicate their trials, to solicit direction in difficulty, and to have the benefit of their ministers' prayers, as well as enlightened counsel and advice.

Have your periods for study, and let them be preserved in as unbroken a manner as possible ; have, also, your hours for seeing any of your flock, who may wish to consult you on matters of importance, and especially on points relating to their own salvation, or the salvation of others. By adopting this plan, you will know more of your people, and your people will know more of you. Mutual interest will be excited ; mutual regard will be awakened ; and the congregation, generally, will be more warmly attached to you, and will cherish a deeper solicitude respecting your personal and domestic happiness, and the result of your public labours.

It is always important to remember, that the influence of a pastor on the Sabbath will be materially increased by the character which he develops at home, and in his intercourse with his people ; by the readiness and cordiality with which he receives the members of his flock ; and by the cheerfulness with which he endeavours to gratify their wishes, and to meet their *reasonable* claims on his time, his talents, his energies.

The minister who secludes himself—who shuts himself up from his people, allowing scarcely any to see him, or, when admitting them, receiving them in a cold, distant, morose manner, will not be loved. He will very soon shut himself out from their respect and regard. In the present day, especially, ministers and pastors must be accessible, at *proper periods*, to their people, else they will accomplish but little.

VI. *Always maintain the dignity of the Christian pastor.*

Never forget the name which you bear. Never be unmindful of the position which you occupy in the church of

God. Never be indifferent to the expectations which are cherished respecting you, as the minister of Jesus Christ. We advocate no haughtiness—no undesirable distance—no cold and disdainful manner towards any, even the poorest, the most illiterate, the most depraved. Nothing which borders on assumption, or pride, must be discovered by you. Quite the reverse. Still, under all circumstances, there is a dignity becoming your station, which you are to maintain. There is a gentlemanly bearing which is to characterise your manner, your conversation, and all your habits. You are to be no trifler, nor are you to permit yourself to be trifled with. You are scrupulously to avoid everything that is little, mean, paltry. You are invariably to be humble and unassuming—to “condescend to men of low estate ;” but never degrade yourself and your office by a light, frothy, familiar manner, which is as unbecoming as injurious. If you are at all desirous of exerting a beneficial influence on the members of your church and congregation, you must exemplify, and, at all times, uphold, the true dignity of the Christian ministry. It is a dignity, be it remembered, which is not secular—which is not derived from anything extrinsic or unsubstantial—which is not meretricious, but which originates from the divinity of the office, the nature and design of the duties which it involves. It is a dignity which springs from enlightened piety in combination with deep humility. It is equally removed from ambition and arrogance. It will preserve the faithful and holy pastor from everything unseemly and improper—from levity, frivolity, meanness—any habits which would degrade him, or impair the influence of his ministry. It will induce him to guard against inconsiderate expressions, injudicious and injurious assertions, intemperate representations, hasty judgments, thoughtless promises ; and thus he will be preserved from evils, which would peril not only his usefulness, but also his happiness.

The dignity you should exemplify, and which is allied

to influence—and, indeed, inseparable from it—is that which would keep you from manners, habits, indulgences, pursuits, conduct, which would infallibly degrade the pastor as a gentleman and a Christian, and sink him as a minister in the estimation of the enlightened, the wise, and the good.

You are to “*magnify* your office,”—not reduce or degrade it. You are to have your own mind impressed with a profound conviction of its vast importance. You are to feel deeply how it is associated with the cross of Christ—with the work of the Saviour—with the realities of eternity—with the salvation of deathless spirits. All your time—all your intellectual and moral energies—all your labours—must be consecrated to it; and to discharge its awful responsibilities, its high and holy duties, must not only occupy the attention, but absorb the spirit. Earthly grandeur, the loftiest secular station—office however elevated, which is identified solely with the present world and the present state, must be esteemed by you as insignificance itself, when contrasted with the exalted dignity of the servant of God, the minister of Jesus Christ. And remember, that “your conceptions of the glory of your office will soon impress the minds of others, and secure proportionate respect.” If this dignity be lost, there may be eloquence, learning, refinement, but there will be no moral power, no commanding influence.

Still, while the dignity of the ministry is maintained, do not let the conviction of its elevated character carry you *too far*—raise you unduly above your people. While the dignity of the pastor is maintained, the affability of the gentleman is to be discovered. In all your deportment, all your manners, all your intercourse with your flock, show that pleasing affableness, that unconstrained politeness, so characteristic of the true gentleman, as well as the educated Christian. Dignity, combined with unassuming and affable demeanour, will secure for you respect and regard, and promote your moral and religious influence. You will be valued

as the friend, while respected and deferred to as the minister of Christ.

VII. Attend, with wise discrimination, to *the various classes* in your congregation.

You are to be the pastor, not only of a part of the flock, but of the entire body. *All* the people are intrusted to your care. Over *every one* of them you are appointed to preside; and for the happiness, instruction, and salvation of *all* you are to watch, knowing that you must soon give a minute account to God. That is a most touching and beautiful reference which the Apostle Paul makes to the elders of the Ephesian church—"Wherefore I take you to record this day that I am pure from the blood of *all* men. For I have not shunned to declare unto you all the counsel of God. Therefore, watch, and remember that, by the space of three years, I ceased not to warn *every one*, night and day, with tears."—(Acts xx. 26, 27, 31.)

1. Be attentive *to children*.—They require your attention; marked and peculiar attention. In *their* way, they require almost as much attention as adults. You will have numbers of children in your congregations. Notice them. Speak kindly to them. Take them by the hand and encourage them. Propose interesting and important questions to them. Talk to them about the compassion of the Saviour for "the lambs." Pray publicly and fervently for them. Occasionally address them from the pulpit, and let them see that you take a deep interest in their happiness—their spiritual and eternal welfare. They will *soon* perceive this, for children are very close and quick observers.

Be especially attentive to the children of *pious* parents in your congregation. Remind them of their privileges. Tell them that they are the children of many prayers. Speak to them of their superior responsibility, and of the solemn account which they will have to render to God at last.

The most eminent and useful ministers have been exceed-

ingly attentive to children, and have discovered great solicitude on their behalf. It is stated respecting the amiable Dr. Doddridge, who breathed so much of the spirit of his Lord, that he had deep concern and affectionate regard for the rising generation. Besides an annual sermon to young persons on New Year's Day, he often *particularly* addressed them in the course of his preaching; and, in his conversation also, he discovered that sense of "the importance of the rising generation," which he has expressed in his sermon upon that subject, and which he has so warmly exhorted parents to cultivate, in his "Sermons on the Education of Children." He much lamented the growing neglect of ministers to catechise the children of their congregations; and to this neglect imputed many of the irregularities which are to be seen in youth. He deemed this a most important part of his pastoral work, and pursued it during the summer seasons, through *the whole course* of his ministry, though his avocations were so numerous. He was so sensible of the usefulness of this work, and the skill and prudence necessary in conducting it, that, among other resolutions which he formed, at his entrance on the ministry, the following was discovered: "I will often make it my humble prayer that God would teach me *to speak to children* in such a manner as may make *early* impressions of religion upon their hearts." He had much satisfaction in these benevolent and Christian efforts. Several children, who died while under his catechetical instructions, manifested so deep a sense of religion, "such rational views, and lively hopes of glory," as were delightful and edifying to their parents and friends.*

The distinguished Cornelius was *habitually attentive* to children. He almost uniformly recognised those whose parents or relatives belonged to his congregation, and seldom did a child pass him unnoticed. His interest in children was the result of native kindness, and also of Christian principle. He wished to secure their affections, in

* See Orton's Life of Doddridge.

order that he might do them good. "Rarely ever," remarks a member of his church, "did a pastor so enlist the affections of children. Every little countenance brightened when he came in sight; the children *loved him indeed*." Covet this. Cherish this spirit most ardently. It will, in the course of years, signally increase your influence, and secure for you *a large and precious blessing*. Many children, won to Christ through your instrumentality, may meet you, and hail you, before the throne of God. How inspiring the anticipation!

2. Be attentive to *young persons in your congregation who are just entering on active life*.—You may have a considerable number of these intrusted to your charge, and it is most important that you should concert plans, and employ efforts, for their special benefit. They have arrived at a most critical period in their history. Their physical and mental energies are fully developed. They are marked by their life and fervour. They may discover fine qualities. They may be of *immense service* to you, and to the church of Christ. Do not neglect them. Do not be indifferent to their moral and spiritual elevation. You have a rich and extensive field here to cultivate; let it not lie waste. By prudent, persevering, devoted attention to young men and women in your congregation, who are marked by their intelligence and animation, and readiness to labour, you may increase the power and efficiency of your ministry tenfold. But then, to gain them, you must be enlightened and interesting in your preaching. You must be kind and amiable in your spirit. You must be bland and persuasive in your manner. There must be an intellectual and Christian attractiveness about you. You must specifically address them from the pulpit. You must show them that you are their sincere friend. You must discover the utmost solicitude to "lead them into the truth." You must request their aid and co-operation. You must tell them how useful they might prove—what blessings they might be to you, and the church of God with which they are connected. In

this way you must endeavour to draw them, and find something for them to do; and, rely on it, you will gain many to work with you—to encourage and stimulate you in your labours—and you will see, increasingly, that the Lord is blessing your instrumentality. You will have many interesting and noble-minded young men and women given you, as your spiritual converts—the fruits of your wisely-directed and persevering efforts, and they will be ready to aid you in carrying out any benevolent and wise measures, by which the kingdom of Christ may be extended.

3. Be attentive to *experienced and aged Christians* in your congregation.—You may have many of these valuable persons among your regular hearers, and, while you are anxious, intensely anxious, respecting the young, let not aged believers see that they are forgotten, or comparatively disregarded. They demand from you marked consideration, sympathy, and respect. Show them that you know how to value the character of an experienced Christian; one whose views of the truth are broad and deep—realising and increasingly influential; and let it be observable that nothing affords you greater pleasure than to converse with those whose illustrations of Scripture texts may be lively, comprehensive, and original—and whose remarks on the Gospel, on the human heart, on the excellence and power of religion, may be most devout and profitable, and, often, singularly impressive. And let the aged believer in Christ see that you can speak “a word in season” to him; that you are solicitous for his comfort in the decline of life; that you are anxious to cheer him by the promises, while he is anticipating eternity; and that you desire, as much as possible, to alleviate his burthens and diminish his fears, while he is looking forward to an entrance into “the dark valley.”

It is surprising how such kind consideration and benevolent regard, on the part of a pastor, is felt by the aged saint. The richest consolation is afforded. He sees that

the minister is only anxious to do him good, and he dies pouring forth almost his *last* prayers for a blessing on the head and heart of his pastor, who has been so sympathetic and affectionate towards him at that period, so solemn and affecting, when “the grasshopper is a burden,” and “when desire itself fails.”

4. Be attentive *to the poor*.—There is no fear of the opulent having too little attention paid to them; but remember that you are, as the servant of Jesus Christ, to be *specially* attentive to the poor, and, pre-eminently, to the poor of Christ’s flock. Think of their *difficulties*—their trials—their struggles. Few know the bitterness of their sorrows. How they endure in silence—in obscurity, and, frequently, during the whole of life, in the most submissive and uncomplaining manner.

Dwell on the *excellences of character* which they so often discover. How clearly and brightly, and, yet, how unostentatiously they develop the graces of the Holy Spirit, in all their loveliness and harmony, under circumstances the most trying, and, apparently, the most unfavourable.

Ponder the beautiful sentiments and encouraging assurances of *Christianity*, which are applied immediately to them. Our Lord expressed it, as characteristic of his dispensation of benevolence and mercy, that “the poor have the Gospel preached to them”—that is, peculiarly, pre-eminently.—(Matthew xi. 5.) Upon one occasion—He lifted up his eyes on his disciples and said, “Blessed be ye poor, for yours is the kingdom of God.”—(Luke vi. 20.) The evangelist James thus encourages the poor believer—“Let the brother of low degree rejoice in that he is exalted,”—(James i. 9); and bursts forth in the following delightful manner:—“Hearken, my beloved brethren, hath not God chosen *the poor of this world*, rich in faith, and heirs of the kingdom which he hath promised to them that love him?”—(James ii. 5.)

Contemplate who have discovered the *greatest discrimina-*

tion with regard to the doctrines and peculiar excellences of Christianity, from age to age—who have been the most accurately read in the Scriptures—who have entered most deeply into “the mysteries of the kingdom”—who have enjoyed most largely the experience of the people of God—who have received the Gospel the most readily, sustained it, according to their circumstances, the most liberally, and encouraged the hearts of the ministers of the Word, the most cheerfully and uniformly—the holy poor.

Be, then, particularly mindful of the poor—and, pre-eminently, the poor of the Saviour’s family. Sympathise with them under all their sorrows. Speak to them with the utmost kindness. Endeavour to alleviate their burthens. Show them that you think of them—that you pray for them—that you cannot pass them by. Let them observe this spirit, and how will they be devoted to you! How will they pour forth their prayers and blessings on your head—and how will their fervent petitions be answered in your pastoral experience!

You cannot imitate your Lord and Saviour if you are inattentive to the poor. You cannot legitimately expect a blessing if they are treated with indifference and disdain. It was the remark of a distinguished minister, that “he should consider it *quite a calamity* if the pious poor could not enjoy his preaching, and if he had not their blessing.”

It is observed of the excellent Abraham Booth, that, as a pastor, he was *eminently attentive* to the poor of his flock, and could always find time to call on them, to visit them, even if others thought themselves neglected. This, also, was a beautiful feature in the pastoral labours of the sainted Robert Hall. Let it be conspicuously unfolded by you. It will be associated with rich and innumerable benefits.

5. Be attentive to *anxious inquirers*.—We refer to those in your congregation who are seeking after God—who are inquiring after the Saviour—who are most solicitous to be led into the right way—to ascertain which is the path to the

kingdom, and whether they have entered that path—who have many difficulties, and want them to be removed; many anxieties, and want them to be dispersed; many fears, and want them to be scattered.

This is a most interesting class in your congregation, and, frequently, a most numerous class. Do, we entreat you, pay *marked attention* to them; and, by the simplicity of your preaching, the clearness with which you exhibit the great subjects of the Gospel, the constancy with which you dwell on the vital points of Christianity, and the persuasive tenderness with which you express the invitations of the Redeemer, and unfold the way of salvation through his blood, let their cases be met, their inquiries answered, their doubts resolved, their minds established. You may, by mingled discrimination, wisdom, and love, prove invaluable to persons of the character referred to among your stated hearers.

6. Be attentive to *backsliders*.—You may have many of these sitting under your ministry, and with some you may be acquainted. They might have made, at one period, a striking profession of Christianity—discovered no ordinary zeal, energy, and apparent devotedness to the cause of Christ; but the seductions of the world, the power of temptation, the influence of sin prevailed, and they became lukewarm, then cold, and proceeded, from one step to another, until they became indifferent to religion altogether. You may have, we repeat, many persons in this situation hearing the Gospel regularly from your lips. Adapt your ministry to them. Meet their specific and deplorable case. Be plain, powerful, pungent. Exhibit the evil of sin—the necessity of repentance—the misery of leaving God—the infinitude of the love of Christ—the ingratitude and criminality of “crucifying afresh the Son of God, and putting him to an open shame.” And, if you find that any of them are discovering genuine contrition, do not be stern or relentless. By no means. This is not the spirit you are to manifest. Be kind, tender, compassionate. Bind up their

wounds. Exhort them to cry to the Saviour for mercy. Tender the invitations of the Gospel to penitent backsliders, and assure them that, if they have truly repented before God, he has "healed their backslidings, he has received them graciously, he has loved them freely."

We often think that backsliders, and, especially, repentant backsliders, are by no means sufficiently regarded by the ministers of the Gospel. Many a fine opportunity of imitating the Saviour in this respect, and of doing good to persons under these critical and deeply painful circumstances is lost sight of, or not sufficiently improved.

7. Be especially attentive *to the officers and members* of the church over which you preside. They expect it from you, and are entitled to it; and every enlightened and wise pastor will be anxious to cultivate appropriate and desirable feelings in relation to them.

With the deacons of the church you are most closely connected; their influence in the society is considerable; they may be of material service to you; in all cases of difficulty and importance in the church, you require their counsel and co-operation;—indeed, you cannot go on, safely and efficiently, without them. Study, therefore, their individual character. Be respectful and amiable towards them. Let Christian love be cherished for them. Defer appropriately to their counsel. Elicit their talents. Awaken and combine their energies. Secure their help at your devotional meetings. Make them your steady and devoted friends—and *do nothing* in your congregation, of any moment, without them. Act with the deacons, and endeavour always to work in concert with them. You will find it of very great importance.

And be exceedingly attentive to the members of the church. They are your *peculiar charge*. They have invited you. They expect to be fed by you with "the finest of wheat,"—"with knowledge and understanding." They wish you to preach in such a manner as that they may be

instructed, edified, stimulated to glorify the Redeemer. They solicit your counsel, your sympathies, your prayers. They are prepared, if holy persons, to co-operate with you in every "labour of love." Let them see that you value them—appreciate their character. Mark, and nicely observe, their distinctive excellences. Honour them as the disciples of Christ, and be very anxious to do them good. Aim continually at their advancement in the divine life—their progress in everything that is scriptural, holy, heavenly. Endeavour to employ them all in works of benevolence and usefulness, so that you may be encouraged, and that, through them, the kingdom of the Redeemer may be extended.

It is recorded of Abraham Booth that the members of his church found he had *the bosom of a shepherd*, and the *heart of a father*. This was pre-eminently the spirit of Doddridge—of Philip and Matthew Henry—of Alexander Waugh. And can we find a nobler exemplification than that which is furnished by the illustrious Apostle Paul,—“As ye know how we exhorted, and comforted, and charged *every one* of you, as a *father doth* his children;—that ye would walk worthy of God, who hath called you unto his kingdom and glory.”—(1 Thessalonians ii. 11, 12.)

VIII. Pay marked attention *to the sick and dying*. No duties in connexion with the pastorate are more appropriate, or more expected from you, than those which relate to the afflicted—any of your flock confined to the chamber of sickness, any who are awaiting their great change. They are engagements, too, which are perpetually recurring, and for which you should be continually prepared. Indeed, you should consider the fulfilment of these duties as your special and most important business. Sure we are, that, in wisely and seriously discharging these labours, you may be rendered eminently useful, by the instruction you impart—by the errors you correct—by the sympathy you express—by the consolation you administer—by the prayers you prefer

—by the admonitions to which you give utterance—by the fears you are often instrumental in removing—by the hopes which, through the Divine blessing, you may be the means of exciting, strengthening, or confirming. You will find, however, that no duties are *more difficult* of performance than those to which we refer. They require the utmost preparedness of mind and heart. There should be the greatest caution and wisdom discovered. Acquaintance with character is essential. Ministerial fidelity is indispensable. There should be a kind and tender spirit cultivated. Every effort must be made to correct any erroneous or dangerous opinions, which may be entertained by persons visited by you in the sick chamber. There must be no timidity—no false delicacy—no disposition to cry, “Peace, peace! when there is no peace.”

In the whole routine of pastoral labour you will realise the truth of the observation, that, “to visit the sick and dying, in such a manner as to be rendered a blessing to their souls, is one of the most benevolent, honourable, and important, still, one of the most arduous parts of ministerial duty; and pre-eminent wisdom and grace from above will be essential, in order that you may glorify Christ Jesus the Lord, in the sick and dying chamber.”

In the fulfilment of these solemn and momentous duties, the honoured Cornelius peculiarly excelled. It is mentioned by his biographer, that, “in the sick chamber, no one could surpass him. As soon as he heard that a parishioner was sick, he hastened to his bed-side. These visits were characterised by a tender sympathy, as well as by a faithful exhibition of the requirements of the Gospel. In his intercourse with the sick, he was remarkable for the *gentleness of his manner*, a trait which those know how to estimate, who have felt the influence of disease on the nervous system. Often would the sick in his parish, when speaking of the pleasure and benefit which they derived from his visits, add, ‘and he was *so gentle*.’ He made the sorrows of his people his own,

and not only sympathised with their affliction, while with them, but carried home a tender remembrance of their griefs, often speaking of them, and praying for them in his family." How beautiful this is! How benevolent! How finely it exemplifies the spirit of the Gospel, and the temper of the Lord Jesus! How it recommends Christianity! How it develops the real character of a minister of Christ, and how it augments his influence in the noblest sense!

How true is the remark, that "the houses, the cottages, the *sick chambers*, of his congregation and neighbourhood, will be more eloquent in the praise of a minister and pastor, and more effective in promoting his influence, than public discourses, however brilliant in imagination, profound in argumentation, or elegant in language."

Let it be your study to deserve this eulogy. See that you never neglect the sick and dying. Go to them at the *first* call, and let it be manifest that your constant solicitude is to be rendered a blessing to them, under the most solemn and eventful circumstances in which any immortal beings can be placed; and be useful, at once, in softening the bed of sickness, as well as in brightening the passage which leads to the tomb.

IX. *Never disregard the Sabbath school.*

If you do, after being settled, you will be acting most unwisely—most improperly—most injuriously. There is no institution more characteristic of the empire and the age than the Sunday school. There is no instrumentality which is more beautiful from its simplicity—more striking from its adaptation—more attractive from its benevolence—more important from its efficiency—more wonderful from the results of which, by the Divine benediction, it has been productive. What would be the present state of our congregations and churches, if the Sabbath school had not existed? What the moral and religious condition of our populous towns, and crowded cities, if, during the last fifty years, the

mighty influence of the Sunday school, in illuminating the mind, in elevating the character, in preparing for life, in fitting for the church, in sustaining in the prospect of eternity, had not been felt and exerted?

Society at large is unspeakably indebted to Sabbath-school operations—they have not only been most extensive and important, but *perfectly invaluable*. Besides, our best congregations are those in connexion with which the Sunday school has been the most vigorously and benevolently supported. Our most efficient ministers are those who have sprung from the Sunday school, and we are increasingly persuaded that this noble institution cannot be too vigorously sustained—that interest too deep and intense cannot be felt in it—that prayers too fervent cannot be offered for its enlargement and growing prosperity.

We, therefore, earnestly say to every young pastor, discover *the utmost interest in the Sabbath school*. Visit it regularly. See what is its actual state. Express solicitude for its advancement. Ascertain if the children are wisely classified. Learn if there be any good doing. Mark deserving pupils, and encourage and reward them. A kind word from you in the Sunday school will frequently effect wonders.

Pay attention *to the teachers*. Unfold to them the importance of their character, the dignity and responsibility of their office, the great usefulness of their labours. Affectionately counsel them. Stimulate them to persevere in their undertaking. Exhibit to them their temptations, dangers, and inducements to energetic and constant effort. Present frequent and importunate prayer for them, that qualifications may be increased, and that success may be afforded. Such conduct on your part will be of incalculable advantage to yourself; it will attract esteem and love—it will induce honour—while it will be of the utmost moment to the teachers, and the school generally.

Be attentive, also, to *Bible classes*—to their formation,

maintenance, and improvement. Let these be composed of the elder scholars, or of the more intelligent and promising young people of your congregation. They will be of great value to you. They will be admirable auxiliaries to the church. They will materially inform the minds of numbers with regard to the Holy Scriptures—preserve them from falling into error—induce reflection and inquiry—and prepare them, not only for receiving greater benefit under the instructions of the sanctuary, but for the early reception of the Lord's Supper. If you cannot have a Bible class yourself, regularly visit those classes which may be formed in your congregation, catechise and occasionally address the various members. Select very judicious and devout persons to conduct them—let fervent prayer be presented for all connected with them—and you will find that such classes cannot be maintained without invaluable advantages resulting.

Carry out these principles in the Sabbath school, among the teachers, and the various Bible classes, and an impulse will be given to your labours, not only most wholesome and beneficial, but which will often awaken your utmost surprise.

How just is the observation, that “the congregation alternately visited, and whose children are wisely instructed by the minister, will appreciate his worth, and esteem him for his work's sake. His fidelity, consistency, and piety, will excite an interest which nothing else can awaken, and exert a control which nothing else can create.”

X. Let your *church meetings be wisely conducted.*

Convene them *regularly*, even if you have no business of importance to transact, as there is a fine opportunity presented for the members, as a body, assembling, so that solemn and special *prayer* may be offered previously to the administration of the Lord's Supper. Under all circumstances, however, when meetings of the church are con-

vened, let them be strictly meetings of the members to execute matters relating to the peace, happiness, increased spirituality, and enlargement of the church.

At these meetings be very particular that everything "be done in order." Uniformly preside yourself, as the pastor of the church. This is most appropriate, desirable, and necessary. Open the meetings with a short and solemn prayer, and generally conclude with prayer, too, unless you prefer calling on one of the deacons.

Check everything *unseemly* at these meetings—all noise—all gossip—the introduction of unpleasant matters—and all subjects foreign to the business which you desire to have accomplished.

Make your church meetings *as devotional* as possible. Let the prayers presented—the address delivered to the members—the conversation respecting candidates for communion, or matters associated with the prosperity of the society—be marked by their edifying and purely spiritual character. This is most important—and will materially conduce to the order, tranquillity, and comfort of your church meetings, as well as to their beneficial tendency.

See that these meetings are *not too protracted*. There is no necessity for their being prolonged, except you have very special business to transact—and it is a good rule, which you will find of moment, not to extend them unduly. A short, well-conducted, devotional meeting, is far better in every respect than a protracted one, unnecessarily prolonged, and conducted with little discrimination or wisdom. At *all* your church meetings embrace the opportunity, if possible, of delivering a few suitable and impressive counsels to the members—counsels marked by their simplicity and admonitory character—strictly applicable to the name which they bear, as the acknowledged disciples of Christ, and to the relations which they sustain—and reminding them, seriously and earnestly, of the vows into which they have entered—the obligations which are imposed on them—and

exhorting them to continued separation from the world—higher degrees of spirituality—and *entire consecration* to the Divine service. Such addresses delivered by you, short, pointed, solemn, affectionate, will be sure to operate—will raise you in the estimation of your devout members, and will be of *essential benefit* to the church.

XI. Discover *the utmost care in admitting members to the church.*

In the reception of candidates for communion, you cannot be too prudent, too discriminating. The greatest sobriety of judgment, and penetration with regard to character, will be requisite. Not that we wish you to be unduly rigorous—to discover a forbidding sternness, as unwise as unlovely—or to maintain terms of communion which the Word of God does not authorise, and which the Saviour himself does not enjoin. Still, under *all* circumstances, be particular, be cautious, be *satisfied*.

See that the candidates are *enlightened* persons—that their views of Divine truth are clear, sound, experimental, realising—that they are acquainted with the character and work of the Saviour—that they know the evil of sin—“the plague of their own hearts”—the supreme excellence of the Gospel—and the extreme importance of personal piety.

See that the character of the candidates for church fellowship will bear the *strictest investigation*—that their character is marked by its integrity, purity, spirituality, and holy elevation. You cannot be too particular in *this* respect. Excellence, Christian excellence of character, is *essential* to membership. If you have doubts with regard to any candidates, let their nomination to the society be postponed. There is nothing gained by undue haste, especially in matters of so much consequence. Take time for inquiry; and you will find it an excellent and important rule on which to act, *before any are proposed* for communion, that you consult with the officers of the church. Learn *their* opinion, ascertain

if they are satisfied, and get them, should it be necessary, to make the requisite inquiries. The deacons may know more of many candidates than you do; and it is of considerable importance, in all these transactions, that you, and the deacons of the church, should arrange and work in concert.

Do not consider a letter merely, from a candidate, sufficient, without personal conversation and inquiry, or a testimonial from some minister or church respecting his character. It is an *easy thing* to write a good and very plausible letter, and to give a touching account of what is termed the dealings of God with the soul, and yet to be no Christian. We have been deceived in this way more than once, and so may you; therefore, be on your guard. Remember, when a candidate for membership waits on you, that a change of heart is *essential*—that love to Christ is *indispensable*—and that the best evidence of fitness for the Lord's Supper is that furnished by a humble, holy, heavenly life upon the earth—a life in unison with the character and example of the Son of God *himself*.

XII. Be *very regular and devout in administering the Lord's Supper*.

There is no service which you will invariably find, if you think and feel correctly, more *solemn* in itself, more solemnising in its influence over your own mind, or more deeply affecting and impressive to the people of God over whom you preside.

No service is more *beautiful*, as a memorial of the love of Christ to his church, as a perpetual testimony of the design and efficacy of the death of the Redeemer, and as furnishing a striking emblem of the hallowed union of all the Saviour's disciples.

There is no service, also, which is more *important* to every Christian society—which is more calculated to do good to the members. By its regular and devout observance, their

humility is deepened—their faith is invigorated—their love to Christ is inflamed—their spirituality of mind is promoted—their obedience is quickened—their attachment to the people of God, as “one fold, under one Shepherd,” is increased—and their desires after heaven are rendered more ardent. As, therefore, the ordinance of the Lord’s Supper is so beautiful in itself—so solemnising and tranquillising in its influence—so expressive of the love of Christ to his followers—so calculated to prove an inestimable blessing to the society over which you are placed, be *very regular* in its observance. Let there be no uncertainty with regard to the *time* of its celebration. There are some few churches which observe it every Sabbath—some which celebrate it only once every quarter—but the general rule, in Congregational societies, is to observe it, at least, *once a month*. The first Sabbath in the month is the period fixed, and it is a service anticipated by the ministers of Christ, and the disciples of the Redeemer, with most elevated sentiments—with most joyous and grateful emotions. Our earnest counsel, on this subject, to you is, be as punctual and undeviating as possible in the celebration of this most interesting and improving of all services. Let nothing but *necessity* induce you to alter the time of its celebration, or, under any circumstances, to *omit* its observance.

Be *at home* yourself to administer it. This is an excellent rule, to which you will find it of importance to adhere. You know more of your members than any other minister, and they know more of you. You are better acquainted with the state of the church than any brother who might officiate; and, consequently, you can adapt your exhortations and encouragements more strikingly to the communicants than any stranger. Besides, if your people value and love you, they will always prefer seeing you preside at the Lord’s table to any other minister. The most judicious and useful pastors are rarely absent on communion Sabbaths. The excellent Dr. Waugh was rarely from home on these

sacred occasions—and it was a rule to which the sainted Matthew Henry almost uniformly adhered. His communion Sabbaths at Chester were his most delightful and glorious Sabbaths—not merely emblems, but prelibations of the “Sabbatism” of Paradise.

Be as *experimental* and *devout* in your addresses at the sacramental board as possible—nothing cold—nothing critical—nothing alien from the service. Dwell, as tenderly and warmly as you can, on the love of Christ—on the sufferings of the Redeemer—on the design and efficacy of His death—on the all-sufficiency of His grace—on the privileges and obligations of His followers. And, in counselling and encouraging the members, show the utmost wisdom—discover the utmost solemnity—breathe the utmost devotion—pour forth the utmost love. These addresses at the Lord’s table—short, pointed, tender, and hallowed—will impress, humble, console, and admonish, almost more than any other.

Let your *prayers*, also, on these occasions, be marked by peculiar simplicity, tenderness, and fervour—the spontaneous and ardent expression of love to Christ, and love to your people.

You may, too, with the *best* effect, at these periods, deliver a few admonitions and encouragements to the spectators of these sacramental solemnities. A kind invitation—a tender expostulation—a pertinent inquiry in relation to them—may be productive of lasting benefit.

Carry out these principles, and you and your church will anticipate communion Sabbaths with eagerness, and celebrate their services with hallowed and unspeakable delight.

XIII. Uniformly maintain *your prayer meetings*.

No religious services, if conducted with intelligence and wisdom, will be found more interesting to yourself, or more valuable to the devout members of the church; and, provided that the devotional spirit is kept alive, and that they are

well sustained by the people of God among you, no services will be more *beneficial* to those who may attend them. These meetings for social and united prayer greatly encourage the pastor's heart; they powerfully stimulate him in his arduous labours; they draw down the Divine blessing, in an abundant manner, on the people; and they furnish a pretty clear and decisive index to the state of religious feeling in the society. A professedly Christian congregation, without a prayer meeting, is *an anomaly* and a *disgrace*; and a congregation holding meetings for prayer, and yet taking *no interest* in them, ought not to wonder that there is little or no Divine light and love, energy and blessing.

It is much and increasingly to be regretted that our congregational prayer meetings are, in the majority of instances, so *scantily attended*;—that there are so few of the members of the church present—that so small a number of the regular congregation on the Lord's day cherish any desire whatever to give their attendance. There may be a large, and even crowded assembly on the Sabbath evening, but on the Monday evening only twelve, or twenty, collected to implore the Divine benediction on the services of the preceding day. Can we at all wonder that the blessing is withheld, or, if communicated, is very partial in its manifestation? Still we must observe, with regard to attendance at the prayer meetings, and the benefits resulting from them, much, *very much*, will depend on the pastor himself—on the regularity with which he presides at these services—on the interest which he feels in them—and on the judicious manner in which they are conducted.

It should be an important rule with every pastor, to make the prayer meetings *as interesting* as possible. Frequently, as conducted at present, they are almost the reverse of being engaging, or attractive. Let the prayers presented on these occasions be short, and marked by as much variety as you can introduce. How often are our devotional services

marred, and the most unfavourable effect produced, by the length, monotony, and tediousness of the supplications which are offered! Deliver a neat and affectionate address at your prayer meetings, or explain some passage of Scripture. It will impart vivacity—deepen interest—and secure a larger attendance. Exhort your people to be present at these meetings as frequently as possible—indeed, to *make an effort* to be present; and unfold to them the great and paramount importance of these devotional services. If your congregation value you, and, above all, if they value the Saviour, a *kind word* on this subject will accomplish a great deal;—and let them be often reminded, having from you “line upon line.”

And be very earnest in maintaining your *missionary prayer meetings*. They are, yet, by no means appreciated; the attendance on them is frequently most unseemly and disgraceful. We cannot, however, refrain from thinking that, were they well conducted—a little more variety and vivacity introduced—missionary intelligence judiciously and pleasingly conveyed—truly missionary prayers presented, and a truly missionary spirit breathed, a great alteration in the attendance would soon be visible, and they would be rendered very attractive, beneficial, and impressive. Again we say, *do not neglect your prayer meetings*.

XIV. Take a deep interest *in the week-day evening lecture*.

It is obvious, to every rightly constituted mind, that a well-conducted religious service, with a suitable discourse, is exceedingly desirable about *the middle of every week*, to correct the influence of the world, which is soon powerfully exerted—to deepen religious and holy impressions, which are soon weakened—and to prepare the congregation more effectually for the duties, temptations, and sorrows, associated with business, the family, the multiplied avocations and changes of life.

Such a service is peculiarly edifying and refreshing to the

people of God. It is one which they cannot give up—cannot neglect. It is one which they anticipate and enjoy, very often more than the services of the Sabbath. Greater simplicity marks the discourses delivered. They are more experimental in their character. The paternal spirit of the Christian pastor is more beautifully unfolded. The effect produced is, frequently, singularly tranquillising, elevating, and beneficial.

We earnestly counsel every young pastor to maintain the regular week-evening lecture. On these occasions, be *present yourself*, as often, as *uniformly*, as possible; the people expect it, and the result will be, in every sense, most advantageous. Let your congregations, at these periods, *depend on you*.

See that your discourse be not *too long*. A short sermon of half-an-hour's duration will, during the week, be much more desirable and effective than one extending to fifty or sixty minutes. Your whole service should be comprised within an hour.

Let your subjects, on these occasions, be as *experimental* as possible—subjects descriptive of the Christian character—the principles, emotions, habits, dignity, pleasures, privileges, obligations, prospects, of the children of God. They will be always new, interesting, and improving. Select, at these periods, many beautiful and richly experimental subjects from the book of Psalms.

Let not your week-evening sermons be *unstudied effusions*. Be as simple as possible—as experimental as possible—put as much heart into these discourses as you can—still, let all of them be the result of devout and patient reflection. These may be among your most useful efforts; therefore, in making them, discover no mental indolence. The late judicious and holy John Griffin always devoted *the morning* of the day on which his weekly lecture was to be delivered, in preparation for it. In this respect, *imitate him*. Let your discourse, however short, be clear, well arranged, well

digested, calculated to be useful. It will be appreciated by some, perhaps by many.

Let it be your continual study to aim to *elevate* and *improve* the character of these weekly services. You will find that your own mind and heart will be benefited—that your people will reap many valuable advantages from these interesting labours—and that they will anticipate the services of the Sabbath with greater pleasure—enjoy them with greater animation—and realise, in return, a larger and richer blessing.

XV. Visit your people *with regularity*, and without undue *partiality*,—especially as *the pastor*.

You will accomplish comparatively little, in small congregations particularly, unless attention be paid to this advice. You may apply assiduously to study—you may be constantly adding to your stores of learning—you may compose and deliver beautiful sermons—still, if you never visit your people—if your flock rarely see you, except in the pulpit—if there be no pastoral intercourse with the members—if there be no regular, spontaneous, and kindly visitation, on your part, among your congregation, without showing any undue respect to persons, you must not wonder should your ministry, however sound, intelligent, and superior, not prove very successful.

Well-conducted pastoral visitation is often more effective than pulpit exercises, though most devout and admirable. The people *expect* to be seen by the minister of their choice. A congregation deems it the *incumbent duty* of a pastor to visit his members, and though too much, far too much, is often expected, and even demanded, still we must acknowledge that, to a certain extent, these expectations of the people are not merely warrantable, but just and important.

You cannot know your flock accurately, without visiting the members. You cannot preach to the people appro-

privately and effectively, adapting your ministry to their variety of character and condition, if you do not visit them. You cannot enter into free and unrestrained conversation with them; you cannot become acquainted with their children, and even their domestics—for these are not to be neglected; you cannot become conversant with their personal and domestic trials, and know how, in the best manner, to sympathise with them, and console them, in their endurance, if you do not visit them as a friend, converse with them as a minister of Jesus Christ, and cultivate intercourse with them, as their pastor, and “adviser in the Lord.”

In how wise and admirable a manner did Doddridge conduct himself, in this respect, when settling at Northampton. “I have many cares and labours,” he observes; “may God forgive me, that I am so apt to forget those of the pastoral office! I now resolve—

“1. To take a *more particular account* of the souls committed to my care.

“2. To *visit*, as soon as possible, *the whole congregation*, to learn more particularly the *circumstances* of them, *their children and servants*.

“3. I will make as *exact a list* as I can of those that I have reason to believe are unconverted, awakened, converted, fit for communion, as well as those that are in it.

“4. When I hear anything particular relating to the religious state of my people, I will *visit them, and talk with them*.

“5. I will, especially, be careful to visit the sick. I will begin immediately with inspection over those under *my own roof*, that I may with the greater freedom urge other heads of families to a like care. O, my soul, thy account is great! Lord, I hope thou knowest I am desirous of approving myself a faithful servant of thee and of souls! O, watch over me, that I may watch over them; and, then, all will be well!”

Admirable man! We cannot wonder that on his settle-

ment at Northampton his ministry was accompanied with extraordinary success—that numbers were added to the church—and that, during the whole of his pastorate, it continued to increase in numbers and prosperity. Imitate him in visiting your flock—the *whole* flock—as much as possible; you cannot have a better model. And be very particular in calling on the pious poor—in conversing with experienced believers—in visiting the afflicted. Be very attentive, also, to heads of families. You will find systematic and well-conducted visitation of your people of the utmost benefit to your own mind and heart—of unspeakable advantage to your flock—and of permanent and immense utility to your ministry. “A house-going minister will make a church-loving people.”

Still, let your visits be *short*—long calls are not expected; you cannot give them, and, sure we are, that they are undesirable.

Do not call *too often*—making yourself *cheap*, and exposing yourself, perhaps, to unwarrantable freedoms, and undesirable circumstances.

Do not visit *a few merely*, and neglect the rest. Let it not be said, “Our minister is the pastor of the *rich* in the congregation, but he never regards the *poor*.” See *all*, as regularly and impartially as you can.

Have your *times for visitation*. Not the morning, except on the Monday, when the mind requires repose; but, generally, in the afternoon, when your morning studies have been completed, and when the people are most at leisure to see their minister, or, occasionally, in the evening. Visiting your people two or three hours, daily, will enable you to see a large number in the course of a year. Do not visit on *the Saturday*, except in cases of necessity. It looks ill. Let the Saturday be your preparation day for the Lord’s day.

When you visit your people, make your conversation as *instructive* and *profitable* as possible. Have no frivolous talk. Indulge in no mere gossip. Guard against any ap-

proach to levity, flippancy, or censoriousness. Your people will *soon see* what you are in the parlour. In conversation, let some precious seeds fall, which may lodge in the youthful mind, germinate, and eventually bring forth abundant fruit. You will, when visiting, have fine opportunities of doing good; improve them, for your responsibility is very great. It is stated, respecting the devoted and eminent Rev. W. Tennent, of America, that "in visiting his flock, he so managed his conversation that, while he seldom neglected a proper opportunity to impress the mind with serious things, he always made them *covet* his company rather than avoid it." How enviable is such a talent! Seek to cultivate it.

When mingling with your people, *invariably* visit them as *their pastor*. While you are kind, attentive, and sympathetic, exemplify your character—maintain your position. While your congregation see that you are their friend, let them at the same time perceive that you are their teacher, their spiritual guide, their "overseer in the Lord." This will check undesirable freedom; this will induce them to treat you with becoming respect; this will prepare them to listen with deference to your conversation and advice;—in one word, this will preserve and increase your *influence* among them—for, when once your influence, as a minister and pastor, is *gone*, *all* may be said to be gone. You will do comparatively nothing. Many ministers—and men, too, of superior abilities—have lost all their influence, and neutralised the effect of all their discourses, by a want of prudence in visiting their flock; by a light, unguarded, frivolous, frothy, empty kind of conversation in the parlour—conversation without wisdom, seriousness, or any profitable tendency. Guard against this. It is the rock on which many a vessel, and, apparently, a noble one, has split.

XVI. Cultivate a *liberal and fraternal spirit*.

Let it be palpable to your church and congregation that you have great largeness of heart—that there is no littleness

—no jealousy—no bigotry. Let it be unfolded to *all* in the village, the town, or the city in which you reside, that you have no closeness, no selfishness ; that you cherish no unkind or petty feeling towards any Christian society near you, or any Christian communion. Let it be seen that you have marked expansiveness of mind—that there is no narrowness of thought about you—that you *cannot* be jealous of any—that you would consider it quite a reflection on your character to be regarded by any as the mere partisan—as the sectarian zealot. Ever give utterance to the noble sentiment of Paul—“ Christ is preached, and I therein do rejoice, yea, and will rejoice.”—(Philippians i. 18.) Uniformly breathe his charming prayer—“ Grace be with all them that love our Lord Jesus Christ in sincerity!”—(Ephesians vi. 24.) What beauty the manifestation of such a spirit imparts to the character of a pastor, and especially a young pastor ! How powerfully it recommends him to his flock ! How does it elevate him in their estimation ! How it secures for him the esteem and confidence of the various churches in the district where he resides ! They see his character at once—they appreciate his temper—they lend him their help—they rejoice in his usefulness and prosperity.

Cultivate, we entreat you, this liberal and expansive spirit, and especially at the present period. We do not wish you, by any means, to be indeterminate in your views—to be lax or vacillating in maintaining your sentiments, in relation either to doctrine or discipline ; quite the reverse. Still, never be shy of Christians of another denomination from your own—much less, bitter against them. Show them that you appreciate them, that you are prepared to love them, and that you are determined to labour and strive with them for the furtherance of the Gospel, for the advancement of the glory of Jesus Christ. The narrow-minded, envious, snarling minister is never respected ; while the minister of largeness of mind, and nobleness of heart, is always appreciated and honoured by real Christians of *all* communions.

Be anxious, also, to cherish the most cordial and fraternal feeling towards your *brethren in the ministry*. Let them see that you are no person of little mind—that you are not unwilling to take them by the hand—that you are not indisposed to co-operate. Let them perceive, by your intelligence, your urbanity, your amiableness, your correspondence with them, your readiness to occupy their pulpits, and to serve them in any way you can, that they have among them a true friend and brother. This spirit will operate very powerfully in your favour, and will be of much greater importance to you, during your pastorate, than, in comparatively early life, you are disposed to regard.

How just and impressive is the remark, that “the minister’s influence in his own denomination will arise, principally, from the extent of his moral power at home, and, then, from the cordiality and affection with which he regards his brethren; by the cheerfulness with which he endeavours to meet their claims upon his time, talents, and exertions. He who shuts himself up from his brethren, will soon find himself shut out from their respect and regard. Besides, in the present day, ministers are often required to associate with Christians of other denominations. That association will either materially increase, or considerably decrease, ministerial influence. The influence of the minister must be strengthened, if, with the exercise of Christian charity, brotherly kindness and courteousness, there be manliness in his conduct, straightforwardness in his language, and gentleness in his spirit.”

Exemplify these sentiments during the whole of your pastoral career, and you will find them of invaluable service to yourself and others.

XVII. Show that you are most solicitous for the prosperity of the *great Religious Institutions* of the age, especially for *the evangelisation of the world*.

These institutions are the peculiar feature and beauty of

the church at the present period, and even *the glory of the empire*; therefore, you ought not, as a Christian pastor, desirous of winning souls to the Redeemer, and to “benefit and bless” those around you, to be indifferent to them. And be assured of this, you cannot discover apathy with regard to their maintenance, advocacy, and wide extension, provided you love the Saviour, are carrying out your avowed principles, and are cherishing a spirit of pure and diffusive benevolence towards the human race.

There is nothing in these Societies that is *little*:—they are great, noble, sublime. There is nothing associated with them that is *narrow* and *confined*:—they are not only expansive in their character, but boundless in their range. There is nothing that is *sectarian*:—they breathe only the spirit of our common Christianity.

It is their specific and uniform object to enlighten the dark mind—the mind ignorant of the Gospel—to elevate the human character—to ennoble those who are involved in the lowest moral degradation—to communicate the peace and happiness of Christianity to the wretched, and most miserable in every clime—to convey the blessings of salvation to the most guilty and depraved. Man is regarded—pitied—relieved—instructed—succoured—sought after, so that he may be drawn to Christ, and fitted for immortality, *wherever man is found*.

What is the object of the Bible Society, but to impart God’s best gift to mankind, to *all* people, to *all* nations and families under heaven?

What is the object of the Religious Tract Society, but to convey its multitudinous little publications, its silent messengers of mercy, *all preaching the Gospel*, to *every* part of the world, so that the way to Christ may be shown to millions—the path to immortality plainly and clearly described?

What is the object of the great Missionary Institutions of the age, but to publish to the remotest countries—to the

darkest and most uncivilised people—to the most idolatrous and debased of the human race—that there is a Divine Saviour provided, who is not only infinitely able to save, but infinitely willing to redeem; and that the arms of his kindness and compassion embrace *all in every land*, who receive him, and who are anxious to be devoted to his service?

Now, it is of the utmost importance, during your pastoral career, that you should take a deep interest in these and kindred institutions, to exemplify your *proper* character, as a minister of Jesus Christ, anxious that *all* may receive the blessings of Christianity, and solicitous to advance the glory of that Redeemer whose name is to be *everywhere* exalted, and whose grace and mercy are to be *everywhere* honoured.

Let the claims of these noble Societies be regarded by you. State their objects, and warmly commend them to your people. Advocate their cause. Show your flock what, under God, these institutions have done, and what they are now doing—what difficulties they have overcome—what blessings they have imparted—what triumphant results have flowed from their operations and gigantic labours. Just as you are interested in the progress of these magnificent institutions, will it be seen that you are interested in the progress of Christianity itself; just as you rejoice in the extension of their influence, and the wide diffusion of their benefits, will it be apparent that you are rejoicing in the anticipation of “the latter-day glory,” and exulting in prospect of the evangelisation of the world—the conversion of the whole earth to Christ.

This is the spirit which the Christian pastor should display. While a minister and guide to his own flock, his heart must be *as large as the world*. No interest of man, and, especially, no interest which is identified with his salvation, must be excluded from his sympathy, his advocacy, and his support. Let this temper ever be cherished by you; it will issue in precious results to yourself and others.

XVIII. Attend, especially, during *the whole* of your pastorate, to *four* admonitions.

1. Eschew taking an *active and prominent part in politics*.—You are not ordained to be a political zealot—to take a conspicuous part in political assemblies—to advocate questions connected with the civil rights of the people—but to *preach the Gospel*. Indeed, there are no matters which require greater care, in reference to yourself after ordination, than those which are political in their character and bearings. A person of manly and independent mind—a man of public-spiritedness, and of warm and fearless temperament—is very apt to come forward, and identify himself, to some extent, with political subjects, and to give explicit and public utterance to his sentiments on political rights, disabilities, and grievances. We would fetter none—we would never wish to repress or hoodwink opinion—and, we think, no person ought to be more distinguished by independence of thought, or by the interest which he feels in anything affecting the civil liberty and happiness of the people, than a Christian minister:—still, how important it is for him to remember, that his *great business* is not with the politics of this world, but with the doctrines, institutions, and requirements of Christianity; and we have invariably found, *the less political* ministers of the Gospel have been, the more they have been respected and valued—the more, also, have their labours in the church been blest. It is very difficult, too, to take an interest in political speculations, and local politics especially, without entering into them very fully, and often discovering considerable warmth and vehemence.

In relation, then, to these matters, when settled, be on your guard. The counsel is by no means unimportant. They may be a *great snare* to you—drawing you into worldly company—diverting your mind from your appropriate business—lowering the tone of your spirituality—occasioning you much trouble—exciting considerable dis-

satisfaction among the more pious of your flock — and involving you in many difficulties.

Have your political sentiments, and maintain them with calm and enlightened firmness. There are, occasionally, periods of great public excitement, when questions are agitated of peculiar moment, during which you may, with prudence, come forward to give utterance to great principles, which may be less political than religious in their aspects and bearings. Still, be *exceedingly wary*. See your way very clearly before you come out. Take no step without much deliberation. Above all, do not mix yourself up with political and worldly men; they will soon bring you down to their level. Do not embroil yourself with local and parochial squabbles. Be removed from the noise, tumult, conflicting and angry opinions of an election contest. In the discharge of your pastoral duties, especially in the country, you will be sensible of the wisdom and value of this advice. In small populations you cannot unfold too much caution and circumspection with regard to these points. What can be more just and discriminating than the following reflections?—“When ministers so far meddle and interfere in political strifes as to become imprudent, prejudiced partisans, it is evident that the pastor will be lost in the politician, and his moral influence will be utterly consumed in the fierce fires of party passions. In the parlour, in the sick chamber, in the pulpit, at the table of the Lord, he will be regarded only as the *head of his party*. In the reflections of his people there will be strange recollections of the politician mingling with, and blasting the reputation of the pastor. However loud may be the plaudits with which the public may greet his ear, alas! his eye will perceive, when he enters the sanctuary, sorrow on the countenances of his people, and tears stealing down the cheeks of the faithful. Sighs will fall upon his ear, issuing from bosoms agonised by his conduct. Coming from scenes of political strife, and agitated by earthly passions, he shrinks from the solemnity, stillness,

and spirituality of God's presence and worship in his temple. The fire on the altar of devotion burns dimly; no incense arises; no cloud descends; he performs his duties officially, but not effectively; and hurries from the place which condemns him, because the life, the spirit, the unction of devotion were wanting. Whatever he has gained in the world, he has *lost in the church*. Whatever he has acquired in political popularity, has been at the sacrifice of his *spirituality*."

Let every young pastor seriously ponder the above observations—they are full of truth, solemnity, and power; happy would it be for the ministry if the evils which they depict were always avoided!

2. Be very wary with regard to *stimulating drinks*.—Do not consider this admonition unnecessary, indecorous, offensive. One more significant, more requisite, can scarcely be offered. In this respect you *cannot be too particular*, too *cautious*. If you do not abstain altogether, be *most guarded*, as a Christian, especially as a minister, having so many eyes upon you, and appointed to serve and honour the Redeemer. Always act *from principle*. See that you are not taken by surprise—above all, be extremely solicitous that you may never be influenced by *the love of drink*. Remember, that you have many invitations to partake of what would soon *inebriate*, and that it is impossible for you, as the minister of Jesus Christ, who is to be an *example* to others, in *every respect*, to be too wary.

A wretched habit is quickly formed. You may degrade yourself—injure your reputation—annihilate your ministry—blast your happiness—ruin the labour of years, by taking a *glass* of wine or spirits *beyond* what you could take with safety.

Remember, too, that some are much more easily wrought upon, by a little wine or spirits, than others. Therefore, let every young pastor consider that peculiar care is, *at all times*, necessary; so that he may not dishonour his Master, tarnish the lustre of his profession, or in any degree impair

the results of his exertions. We are always grieved when we hear of young pastors forming two bad habits—smoking and drinking for some time *after dinner*, and invariably *before they retire to rest*. They are very unnecessary, very undesirable, and are likely to be very soon abused. The evil will quickly grow, until the feeling is cherished that such things, at such hours, are *essential*. We say, to all young pastors, *break off these habits—they are bad, very bad;—pernicious, most pernicious! The sooner they are annihilated the better*. We have known *more than one* young pastor not only injured, *but ruined*, by their maintenance; hence we admonish with distinctness, emphasis, and fervour.

3. Be especially marked by the *correctness of your deportment towards the female sex*.—In relation to this point, you cannot be *too prudent*, too vigilantly on your guard. You will have many observers—and everything you do will be scrutinised—and your deportment towards the female sex will be very narrowly watched.

Be, then, in this respect, uniformly careful, dignified, blameless. Let there be no frivolity—no want of delicacy. Let no undesirable and familiar attentions be paid. Act always, in this matter, from high principle, as a man of God—as a holy minister of Christ—as one who is to be a pattern to others, and especially with regard to modesty, delicacy, and true honour.

How many young ministers—and, alas! not young ministers only—have injured their characters, marred the effect of their public engagements, and withered their prospects, by a want of prudence and propriety in reference to the female sex! Most emphatically do we admonish you on this point, as you value everything that will be dear to you throughout your *entire* ministry.

During the whole of life, keep far within the strictest line of modesty, delicacy, and Christian decorum. In this respect, let it be impossible to allege anything justly against you. Such conduct will operate most favourably,

and be a great recommendation. It will, also, induce and establish confidence in you. What is a young minister, or, indeed, any minister, worth, if this admonition be disregarded?

4. Do not be *unduly discouraged with little things*.—In the fulfilment of your ministerial and pastoral duties, you will always have something occurring to occasion solicitude, and circumstances frequently presenting themselves, which will induce unpleasant and painful emotions. When you are occupying so public and important a post as that of the Christian pastorate—when you have so many eyes continually fixed on you—so many persons with whom you are acquainted—so many varieties of temper and character surrounding you—such diversities of taste, education, and sentiment—so many who are restless, complaining, dissatisfied with almost everything, and every person, however excellent—you must not wonder, during your ministerial career, that there will be much to ruffle, to disquiet, to excite anxious thoughts and depressing feelings.

Do not, however, be soon, or greatly discouraged. Calculate on these circumstances, and, fully armed “in the strength of the Lord,” go out to meet them. Be marked by your wisdom, by your love of peace—still, be very firm. Let not comparatively little things, from *any quarter*, annoy you. Rise above man. Yield not to mere clamour. Discharge your duties faithfully as the servant of Christ, and leave Him to take care of you, and to sustain you under all your trials. And, be assured, *He will do it*. Be not too sensitive. Endeavour to feel some trying circumstances as little as possible, else you will be always unhappy; for there are so many shafts directed against public men, however excellent—and the more eminent they are for station, abilities, and even for piety, the more are these shafts multiplied. There will always be some “fault-finders”—some carping, quarrelsome, litigious beings—never satisfied with any man, even though he might equal Paul himself. Rise above them.

“Commit yourself and your way to the Lord.” Spread your difficulties before Him, and ask Him to remove them.

When the excellent Thomas Boston first went to Ettrick, he had much that was peculiarly unpleasant to endure. “Politics, and not religion, formed the topic of discourse in *every house*. His sermons were approved *only* as they bore on the state and affairs of the nation. Personal and experimental religion, on which he *delighted* to discourse in public and private, could seldom be introduced.” How distressing a state of things for *such* a man! He observes—“The approaching Sabbath, that was sometimes my delight, is now *a terror* to me; so that it is my business now to get my forehead *steeled against brass and iron*.”* Still he persevered; he went calmly and devoutly forward, and the Lord enabled him to tower above his difficulties. Opponents were reconciled—very different sentiments and feelings were cherished—and his labours were signally honoured. You must imitate him. Persevere, “through evil as well as good report,” and, when things which are unpleasant occur, do not yield to despondency. Quietly, steadily, and in the spirit of Christ, pursue your way. Check those who would gossip; silence those who would complain; frown on those who would calumniate. Give no encouragement to those who would tell you of any untoward or *little* circumstances which may be occurring. You must, during your pastorate, act in this decided manner to be tranquil and happy. You must let your people see that you simply wish, and, indeed, determine to attend to your duty, and that you are not to be ruffled and annoyed by one circumstance, or moved by another. And when they perceive that you are so decided—so fully resolved to go forward in a calm, bold, dauntless manner, discharging your regular duties, and seeking only to honour the Redeemer—those at all disposed to communicate unpleasant circumstances will be checked—those who might have been inclined

* Vide the valuable *Life of the Rev. Thomas Boston*.

to interfere with you will be prevented—and comparatively little things, annoying and disconcerting others who are unduly sensitive, and who are not acting with the firmness which you discover, will scarcely produce any impression on your mind.

You will find attention to the above four admonitions of great, and even inestimable importance as, in God's strength, you are endeavouring to fulfil the onerous duties of the pastorate.

XIX. Do not be too anxious to *know the results of your labours*.

It is a natural and very laudable feeling to wish to learn what you are doing—whether any good, in the highest sense, is springing from your preaching and pastoral labours—whether impressions are powerfully and extensively produced—in a word, whether many are attracted to the Saviour. Still, even in relation to these points, pre-eminently interesting and important as they are, you must *not be too solicitous*.

Preach faithfully.—Give your people the full Gospel. Declare to them, plainly and boldly, “the whole counsel of God.”

Plan wisely—with the utmost judiciousness and good sense—in uniform accordance with the representations of Scripture.

Labour vigorously and steadily—never be wanting in the energy and perseverance of your efforts.

Pray with unceasing fervour, *and leave the rest with God*.

You must, to discharge your duties efficiently, and for the sake of your happiness, avoid *undue solicitude* respecting the *results* of your instrumentality. God does not require you to bear this burthen. You are to take care of God's cause, and He will unfailingly, in some way or other, command the blessing.

You may never be acquainted, while here, with anything

like the full amount of your usefulness. Many to whom you have been rendered a blessing may be unwilling to communicate, even to you, that, by the Divine blessing, you have been the instruments of spiritual blessing to them. Many, from timidity and a shrinking reserve, may be unable to open their minds to you. Many of your converts may be conveyed far from you. To many you may be unknown. After your departure from one sphere of labour, or your removal to eternity, you may still be useful; the remembrance of former discourses may come with power, or the perusal of some of your printed sermons may be rendered a blessing to numbers, years after your translation to glory.

It is stated, respecting that holy and devoted servant of God, the Rev. Thomas Boston, that he frequently lamented his apparent uselessness, and was often constrained to exclaim, "Who hath believed our report? and to whom is the arm of the Lord revealed?"—(Isa. liii. 1.) He imagined that he was more useful, as a probationer for the ministry, than as a settled pastor. To use his own language, he thought he "*ate his white bread* in his youth." In this, however, he was mistaken. Such a man *could not* labour in vain. How many will bear testimony, on the day of judgment, to his fidelity and success! Besides, his works, so clear, pungent, and admirable, have survived him till this hour, and, though so long dead, he yet speaks to multitudes. His usefulness will not cease till the scenes of time are exchanged for those of eternity.

Every pastor should remember that he is not accountable for the want of success, nor is success under his control; but he is responsible for his fidelity—therefore, he should "labour on" with cheerfulness and constancy, whatever may be the issue of his endeavours. And the remark of Mr. Jay is very striking, and should never be forgotten by the young pastor. "Indeed," observes that enlightened and sagacious observer, "with regard to our success, ignorance, *at present*, may be *safer* for us than knowledge. Popularity is always

dangerous, and frequently injurious; and, perhaps, no kind of popularity is so exciting as that which arises from eminent and distinguished usefulness. If Luther, or Whitfield, or Wesley, could have seen in a vision what they did while living, and what they are doing now they are dead, they might have been 'exalted above measure.' But no danger will attend any discoveries of this kind *hereafter*. There will be no subtle vanity in us to work upon. We shall not 'sacrifice to our own net, or burn incense to our own drag.' We shall see, and acknowledge, that we were only instruments, nor shall we feel, as we sometimes now do, that *we were* the instruments, and employed *rather* than others." *

XX. Be willing to occupy for years a humble situation, *if you are only where God has placed you*.

Do not, we conjure you, be restless and impatient, like many are, in consequence of your position. You may occupy an unpretending station. There may be few advantages for you—indeed, many and great disadvantages. There may be little society—an ignorant people—a scattered population—much depravity—trifling encouragement—inadequate appreciation of your services, and inadequate support. Still, be not fretful, uneasy, broken in spirit, disposed to relinquish your post. It may be the *very place* for you—adapted to your mind and character.

You may require this kind of training and discipline, however trying, for some considerable period. Your humility may be promoted. Your love of popularity may be checked. Your spirituality of mind may be advanced. God may show you, and that, too, in the clearest manner, that in such a sphere, retired, unattractive, comparatively obscure, you may most effectually glorify Him. Besides, you may, after all, realise *more comfort*, in a retired and humble situation, than in a populous and bustling town, in a

* Jay's Works, vol. viii. p. 266.

crowded, exciting city, where congregations are very numerous and very fluctuating.

Remember, too, that some of the most intellectual and eminent ministers have been content to fill lowly, and, as you may deem, unimportant stations for years, in order that they might be better prepared for future service, and might promote the glory of the Redeemer. Think of Fuller, at Soham—Hall, at Arnsby—Boston, at Simprin—and many others.

The situation of the holy and exemplary Boston, at Simprin, was peculiarly uninviting, and connected with much that was exceedingly trying to a minister of his mind and character; yet, there he remained, and faithfully laboured until the Lord *himself* removed him to another part of His vineyard. Simprin, the scene of his earliest labours, was a small parish, and contained, in the days of Mr. Boston, only “*eighty examinable persons*,” and yet he studied and laboured, we are informed, as earnestly and perseveringly for these as he would have done for a congregation *ten times as numerous*. He felt occasionally depressed at the smallness of his charge, but this he attributed to the pride of his heart. “I endeavoured,” he observed, “to be impressed with a sense of the weight of the Lord’s work *in itself*, to compensate that loss (the presence of numbers); and I had the Divine assistance accordingly.” “Though it was a small charge,” he exclaims, with real ministerial nobleness and fidelity, “yet it was *my charge*; and that I was not to look to be useful, according to the number of those I spoke to, but according to *the call of God* to speak to them, whether many or few;” and, acting on this conviction, he adds, “I *never*, that I know, had occasion to rue that part of my conduct.”

In reading the instructive and extraordinary life of the Rev. Philip Skelton, by Samuel Burdy, A.B., we have been particularly struck with one thing,—the readiness of the truly devoted and eminent servants of Christ to labour for the glory of their Redeemer, in the most retired and unattractive

situations. When this distinguished clergyman was stationed at Pettigo, a wild and sequestered part of Ireland, the want of "rational company seemed to add to the natural gloominess of the place." Pettigo, Mr. Skelton called *Siberia*, and said, that "he was banished from all civilised society." "I heard him," remarks his biographer, "often declare that he was forced to *ride seven miles*, before he could meet with a person of common sense to converse with." Without any solicitation on his own part, he was removed from Pettigo to Devinish, near Enniskillen. When leaving Pettigo, he said to the poor, "Give me your blessing now, before I go, and God's blessing be with you. When you are in great distress, come to me, and I'll strive to relieve you." When he obtained, eventually, the parish of Fintona,* he seemed to have arrived at the height of his wishes. He had no ambitious views. "He wished to do good here, in hopes of getting to heaven hereafter. In no human breast was there ever a more settled contempt for the vain pomp of all sublunary things. His people at Fintona being but little acquainted with religion, though well accustomed to whisky and quarrelling, he found it necessary, first, to visit *every* house in his parish, and then to collect, to a particular place, the people of each town-land, that he might instruct them more conveniently." This was, indeed, true Christianity,—the imitation of the Saviour, who "went about the villages teaching."

Do not, then, despise a station because it is sequestered. Think of Berridge, at Everton—Grimshaw, at Haworth—Newton, at Olney—Doddridge, at Kibworth—Scott, at Aston.

Do not get dissatisfied with your charge, because it is limited in extent, because the people are poor and uncultured. You may be rendered a great blessing to them, and a much greater instrument of benefit, than if you were among the educated, polished, and opulent.

Do not aspire *too loftily*—wishing to occupy some very

* In the county of Tyrone.

exalted and conspicuous post. God will be sure to humble you, and to show you your weakness and folly, in some way or other. "It is really amusing, as far as amusement can be indulged in such a connexion,"—observes a distinguished minister,—“to hear some spruce, aspiring, young academicians talk, very significantly, of their having *no objection* to spend *a few of the first years* of their ministerial course in the country, or in a village. But, to hint that they would spend their lives there, would be deemed almost an insult. They seem prodigiously afraid of *burying their talents* in an obscure situation—of not finding a sphere sufficiently elevated and extensive for their great powers. It might not be amiss for some of them to remember, that talents of a *certain* order are as much in danger of being lost in the *publicity* of a large town, as in the *obscurity* of a small village. A candle may be disregarded, on account of the blaze of the meridian sun, as well as because it is ‘put beneath a bushel.’ Besides, no man, unless he is destitute of something more valuable than the greatest mental abilities, can well be afraid that his talents will be lost in the Gospel ministry. Perhaps there is no exaggeration in asserting that the *greatest man*, in point of mind, that ever ascended a pulpit, might find ample employment, in almost the obscurest station, where he had to ‘feed the church of God, which He purchased with His own blood.’ Besides, with the cultivation and the field which the ministry affords, talents will *show themselves*, and attract notice, in almost any situation. The fame of Augustine, bishop of *Hippo*, filled the Christian world, and will last, probably, till the end of time. A beacon, even on a plain, will attract notice; while a taper, though on the top of a mountain, will still be obscure.” *

Appreciating these sentiments, and fully recognising their great importance, we would say to you, if at all unsettled, do not wish to choose for yourself; let God alone choose for

* Vide an admirable portraiture of the Rev. T. N. Toller, of Kettering, in the “Congregational Magazine” for 1821.

you. And do not discover fickleness—continually desiring a change. If you are required to remove, wait and pray, and the Head of the Church will “open a door” for you. “My maxim,” said the devoted Charles, of Bala—and it is a golden one—“for many years past, has been to *aim* at great things; but, if I cannot accomplish great things, to *do what I can*, and to be *thankful for the least success*. If *one* way does not succeed, new means must be tried—and, if I see no increase *this year*, perhaps I may *next*. I almost wish to blot the word *impossible* from my vocabulary, and to obliterate it from the minds of my brethren.” These are admirable sentiments, and cannot be too carefully and practically regarded by *every* pastor, especially every *young* pastor.

Be assured of this—lay it down as an indubitable principle—that, if you discharge your duty aright, and seek to glorify the Lord Jesus, in *any station* he may assign you, however remote and sequestered, your light will shine—your character will be appreciated—your influence will be felt—your labours will be rendered useful—your work will not, *cannot* be executed in vain. You will live to do good, and, when you die, you will die lamented and honoured.

———“ while man is blest,
Your God will have the praise.”

CONCLUDING REFLECTIONS AND APPEALS.

We have now fulfilled our appointed task. The range of observation we have been describing has been most comprehensive, involving principles, to every candidate for the sacred office, not only valuable, but transcendently and ineffably momentous. It has been our endeavour to delineate to you the work of the ministry; to unfold to you its true character and spirit; to direct you in prospect of your entrance on its engagements, its solitudes, its temptations; to counsel you on the studies which you are to prosecute, the habits and manners which you are to cultivate, the piety which you are to exemplify, the character of the preaching at which you are to aim, and in which you are to delight. We have addressed to you a series of admonitions, appropriate and scriptural, *prior* to your acceptance of a call to the pastorate, and many adapted to you *subsequently* to your assuming the pastoral office; and, as we have proceeded in our illustrations and appeals, it has been our object to be as simple, as practical, as faithful, in our representations and admonitory remarks, as possible, and to submit them to you with the utmost urbanity, the deepest seriousness, and the most earnest desire for your permanent respectability, happiness, and ministerial efficiency.

And now, in concluding our exhortations, we would *conjure* you to remember, that the *usefulness* of your ministry will be always associated with its *spirituality*, and will uniformly result from it. The more elevated it is in its character and aims—the holier and more unworldly it is in its principles and spirit—the more significantly will it be honoured and blest. It is *eminent spirituality*, rather than

eminent learning and eminent abilities, which will exert the *greatest influence on ministerial success.*

Who has not admired and loved the character of Dr. Edward Payson? Who has not been struck with the power and efficiency of his ministry at Portland? But what was the secret of his greatness?—what the source of his success? He laid hold on the Divine strength. “Prayer, by which the creature communes with God, and obtains grace to help in every time of need,” was eminently *the business* of his life, and the medium through which he derived inexhaustible supplies. It was not the stated morning and evening incense alone which he offered, but he had much enlargement, and many sweet seasons of prayer during the day. Almost incessantly was he conversant with spiritual and eternal things. “His conversation was in heaven.” And most strikingly have the observations of the acute and honoured Andrew Fuller been verified in the history of the ministers of the Gospel. “In almost all the great works which God hath wrought, in any period of time, he has honoured men of *this character*, by making them his instruments. In the midst of a sore calamity upon the murmuring Israelites, when God was inclined to show mercy, it was by means of his servant, Aaron, running with a censer of fire in his hand, and standing between the living and the dead. The great reformation that was brought about in the days of Hezekiah was by the instrumentality of a man who ‘wrought that which was good, and right, and true before the Lord his God;’ and then it follows:—‘and in every work that he *began* in the service of the house of God, and in the law, and in the commandments, to seek his God, he did it with *all his heart, and prospered.*’ —(2 Chronicles xxxi. 20, 21.)

“There was another great reformation in the Jewish church, about the time of their return from Babylon. One of the chief instruments in this work was Ezra, ‘a ready scribe in the law of his God’—a man who had ‘prepared

his heart to seek the law of the Lord, and to do it, and to teach in Israel statutes and judgments,'—a man who 'fasted and prayed at the river Ahava,' previous to his great undertaking,—a man who was afterwards 'sorely astonished, and in heaviness, and would eat no meat, nor drink water, but fell upon his knees, and spread out his hands unto the Lord his God, on account of the transgression of the people.'—(Ezra vii. 10; viii. 10; ix. 5; x. 6.)

"Another great instrument in this work was Nehemiah, a man that *wholly* devoted himself to the service of God and his people, labouring night and day; a man who was not to be seduced by the intrigues of God's adversaries, nor intimidated by their threatenings; but who persevered in his work till it was finished, closing his labours with this solemn prayer and appeal—'Think upon me, oh my God, for good, according to all that I have done for this people.'—(Nehemiah iii., vi.)

"Barnabas, also, was 'a good man, full of the Holy Ghost and of faith, and much people was added to the Lord.'—(Acts xi. 24.)" *

This must be your character—this your spirit—these your aims and endeavours, if you are anxious in your ministry to have a signal blessing from above. The power of your ministry will always be connected with your personal holiness—its vitality and efficiency on the hearts of men will be at all times identified with your spirituality, and your intimate communion with heaven.

In concluding our appeals we conjure you to *labour faithfully until death*. Your work is not periodical and temporary, but continuous; it is to be the *work of life*. Your engagements are not to cease until you terminate your earthly career. You must persevere till the end. There must be no shrinking, whatever your present or anticipated

* Vide Fuller's admirable Discourse on the Qualifications and Encouragements of a Faithful Minister.

difficulties. There must be no deviation from the straight and holy course of ministerial labour, whatever the obstacles thrown in your way, or the inducements to deviate presented. There must be no relinquishment of your exertions, however you may feel their arduousness, or however painful the trials associated with their performance. You have put on "the harness," and you must never remove it; no, nor *ever wish* to remove it. You are appointed to be a standard-bearer before the Lord's army, and you must never sustain any other character, or fill any other position. You have a proclamation always to utter, and you must ever express it—"Behold the Lamb of God which taketh away the sin of the world."—(John i. 29.) You have certain work to execute—it is work whose importance cannot be exceeded—and you must not leave that work unfinished.

While you have life, you must labour for Christ. While you have any energies remaining, you must exert them to extend the kingdom, and promote the glory of your Redeemer. And what can be more tranquillising to the mind, more sustaining to the spirit, in the prospect of eternity, than to consider that, until the close of life, it was your fixed and enlightened determination to "preach Christ and him crucified;" to unfold the divinity of the Saviour's person—the glory of His mediatorial character—the efficacy of His sufferings—the wonders of His love? Be, then, continually faithful. Let your course ever be onward, till you reach the goal. Let your steady and unfaltering perseverance beautify, ennoble, and consummate all.

In concluding our appeals, we would earnestly recommend you to *keep the crown in view*. Ever regard this with intense solicitude and joyful hope. If faithful to God and the souls of men, this will be the issue of all your labours—the reward of all your holy anxieties—the recompence of all your toils. What can be more stimulating than the prospect! What anticipation can be more calculated than this

to fire the mind—to elevate the character—to concentrate and properly direct the energies—to sustain and cheer, amidst all the peculiar vicissitudes and sorrows connected with the ministerial career!

It will be a crown of surpassing brightness—the crown of celestial purity and glory—whose splendour no language can adequately describe. The crown encircling the head of the holy and devoted minister in the kingdom of God will be one of pre-eminent radiance; for “they that turn many to righteousness shall shine,” in the heavenly firmament, “as the stars, for ever and ever.”—(Daniel xii. 3.)

It will be a crown which the Redeemer himself will impart to you. He will bring it forward. He will appoint it to you as your honourable, yet gracious recompence. He will place it on your head, while he applies to you that glorious language, “Well done, good and faithful servant, enter thou into the joy of thy Lord.”

It will be a crown which can never fade. Its beauty will ever be fresh—its splendour will ever be radiant and divine; nothing will ever dim its lustre or tarnish its glory.

It will be the crown of which no power can ever deprive you. It will be your *eternal* possession—your incorruptible and immortal inheritance. Keep, then, this crown in view. Have it before the eye of the mind continually. In all your studies, your duties, your temptations, your struggles, your opposition, let it be joyously and earnestly anticipated. It will quell anxiety. It will scatter fear. It will annihilate coldness. It will not only mitigate but dispel sorrow. It will quicken and augment your energies. It will purify and heighten your joys. With the crown of glory before us, as ministers of Jesus Christ, who among us should be sad?

In concluding our appeals, we conjure you to *expect meeting your people at the judgment-seat of Christ*. Anticipate, every hour, the final tribunal, and your appearance

there, with *all* the members of your flock—not one absent—and every one there to listen to his sentence, and to receive his doom.

What thoughts are these to fix and absorb the mind! How solemn and overpowering are these anticipations! How vast and inconceivably impressive these realities! If you should, as minister or pastor, prove unfaithful, how will you meet your people at last? If you should be wanting in love—in zeal—in holy fervour—if you should discover little concern for their souls—little solicitude for their spiritual instruction—scarcely any interest in their happiness and salvation—how will you be able to face them on the judgment-day; and, especially, how will you be able to fix your eyes on the Judge himself?

Seriously contemplate these realities. Let the imagination, vividly and continually, present these scenes before it. In them you are most deeply interested. You will soon witness them. You will soon be conversant with all their solemnity and awfulness.

If faithful to your Lord—devoted to his cause—earnest in preaching his Word—fervent in inviting sinners to his feet—supremely anxious to win souls to the Redeemer—you will have a goodly number, and, perhaps, a *multitude*, before the Throne of Glory, acknowledging you as the honoured and blessed instrument employed to attract them to the Lamb, and to prepare them for the endless bliss of Paradise. Parents and children—husbands and wives—brethren and sisters—delivered from hell, and raised to heaven, to be crowned with its dignity and immortal joy, through *your* instrumentality—in answer to *your* prayers—as the result of *your* exertions—and all rejoicing in beholding one to whom, under God, they will feel themselves *eternally* indebted,—all greeting the faithful and holy minister, who will present them before his Divine Master, exclaiming,—“Behold me, O Lord, and the children whom thou hast graciously given me,”—all redeemed by the Saviour’s blood—all perfected by

the Saviour's spirit, and their joy consummated by their introduction to the presence of the Lamb. How blissful and inspiring is the anticipation! The very thought is full of heaven! Cherish it, we beseech you, with the utmost delight. Cling to it with the utmost energy. Hope to meet your people in heaven. Concert your plans—present your petitions—pursue your labours—in such a manner, as that you *may* meet them there. Be determined—be *firmly* resolved, God helping you by his grace, that you *will meet many* of them there, and that you will spend a changeless and glorious eternity together, gazing on the Saviour's matchless beauty—realising the Saviour's unclouded presence and glory—and participating something of the Saviour's bliss,—while “ten thousand times ten thousand” of angels and glorified beings,—“a multitude which no man can number,”—shall encircle the throne, exclaiming, “Worthy is the Lamb that was slain, to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honour, and glory, and blessing!”—(Revelation v. 12.)

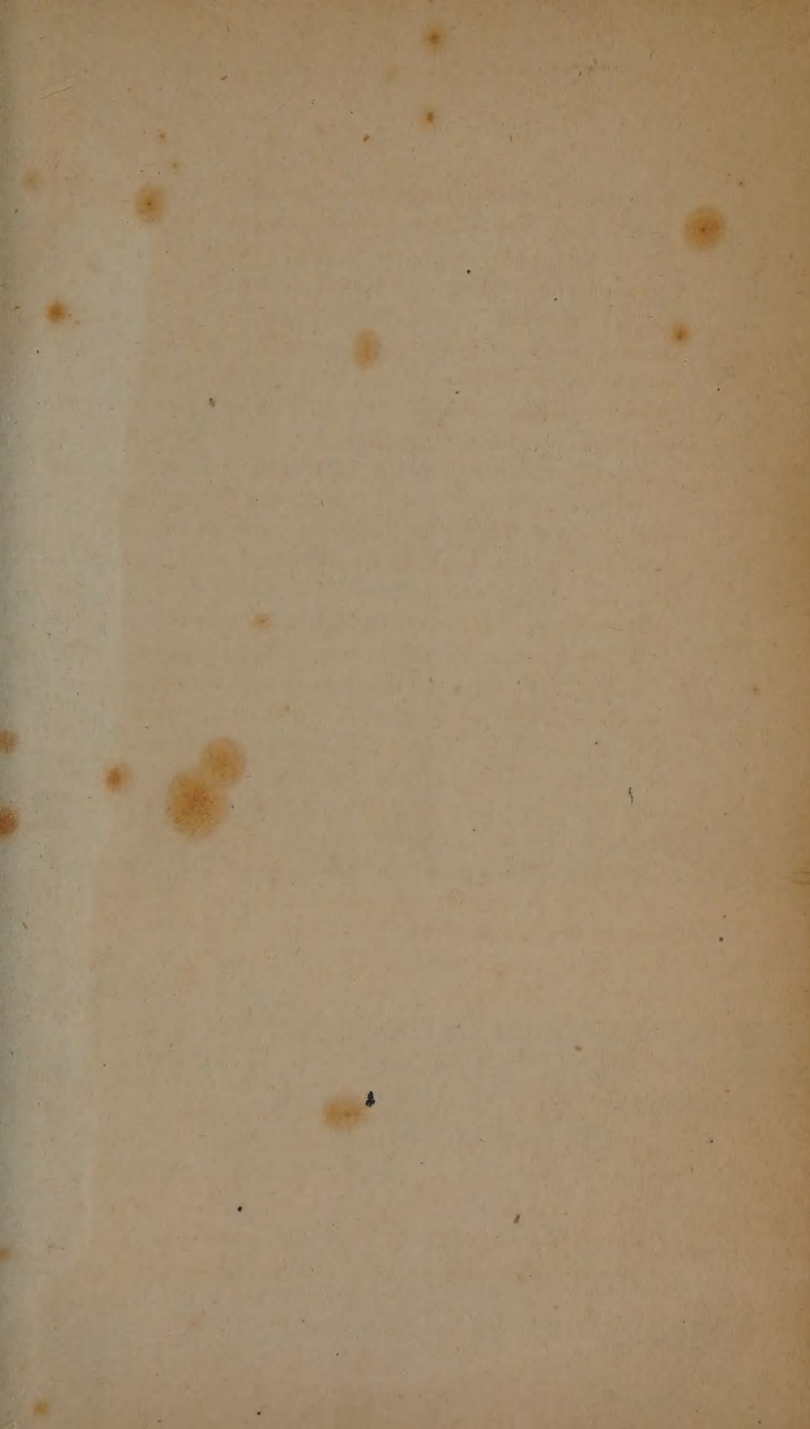
What ecstasy will such anthems occasion! With what dignity and glory will such scenes, and such society, be connected! What indescribable rapture will pervade the spirit of the faithful and successful pastor, surrounded by his converts in Paradise, when countless myriads of intelligent and immortal beings, all standing perfect in the presence of Infinite Purity, and all realising perfect felicity in the presence of Infinite Love, shall unite *in one magnificent* ascription of praise, powerful and sublime “as the sound of many waters,”—which ascription of gratitude, adoration, and seraphic joy shall be ever uttered, and ever accumulating,—“Blessing, and honour, and glory, and power, be unto him that sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb, for ever and ever!”—(Revelation v. 13.)

Inconceivably happy and honoured the servant of God, to whom, on his dying bed, when all his active and benevolent labours have terminated, the Divine Redeemer will

apply that consoling language—"But go thou thy way till the end be; for thou shalt rest, and stand in thy lot, at the end of the days!"—(Daniel xii. 13.) And, when he is gone, with what delight will he and his converts hail each other in Paradise!—"With what delight will they renew the intercourse which death had interrupted, and retrace *together* the steps of their mysterious pilgrimage! While the gratitude they will experience towards him who was instrumental in conducting them thither, will be only inferior to that which they will feel to God and the Lamb. How trivial will every other distinction then appear, compared to the honour of having turned many to righteousness!—of having sown that seed which shall be reaped in life everlasting!

"But should it, in any instance, be otherwise—should the event be of a contrary nature—he 'will be a sweet smelling savour to God,' even '*in them that perish.*' His happiness will be unimpaired, his reward undiminished, and the feelings with which he was wont to contemplate such a catastrophe will give place to sentiments of a higher order. The tears which he here wept over souls in danger of perishing will be shed no more; all his agitation and anxiety, on their account, will be laid to rest; nor will they who refused to constitute his joy, by their conversion, be suffered to mar his felicity, by their destruction." *

* Robert Hall.



Wallace, Thomas

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